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LETTER

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THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

&c. &c.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

LETTER

TO

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

ON

THE REASONABLENESS

A CHURCH REFORM,

AND ITS PECULIAR FITNESS TO THE PRESENT TIMES.

SECOND EDITION,

REVISED AND ENLARGED.

BY A MINISTER OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.

"It is hard for them to avoid blame, who stand so precisely upon altering nothing."—Bacon on Church Controversies.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. RODWELL, NEW BOND-STREET.

MDCCCXXX.

(Price 3s.)
47 6.

[&]quot;Non is sum qui contendam nihil esse quod corrigi possit, aut fortasse debeat, in ecclesia Anglicana.".—Balguy, Concio pro Gradu Doctoratus.



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A LETTER TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, &c. &c. &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

It is a question of late of general and absorbing interest, whether the national gratitude be not as deeply due to your Grace for having carried the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, as for your unparalleled military achievements. But wide as may be here the diversity of judgment, all thinking persons, of whatever political sentiments, will, I am sure, agree in the conclusion, that if your Grace would turn your thoughts towards the *further* reformation of our church, you would do more for the promotion of its best interests, and for the general interests of the Christian religion, than any British legislator whose memory is consecrated by the most exalted of associations.

In bringing, then, before your Grace's no-

tice a subject which has so long occupied a large space in the popular tongue and in popular discourses, and which, since the settlement of the Catholic question, would seem more than ever to court the attention of reflecting men, I ask only a patient hearing; and according as you find that I speak honestly and earnestly, or frivolously and dishonestly, consider my assumptions and facts, or dismiss them as unworthy of your serious attention.

It may be new to your Grace's ears, that your great precursor in arms, Marlborough, once ventured to suggest a plan of church reform to Queen Anne, a leading feature of which was the equalization of bishoprics*; and which

^{*} In the Blenheim Papers, if I rightly remember, as it is long since I was favoured with a perusal of them, there is an allusion to this singular fact. I must conclude, however, that the late Archdeacon Coxe never met with the book from which I quote the anecdote, entitled, A Short Life of that renowned General, John Duke of Marlborough, London, 1740, p. 10, or else he would be justly chargeable with neglect, in giving a professed life of the hero of Blenheim, and yet overlooking a statement so important and un-

had he effectuated, would have been ranked by many of the clergy and laity of these times, and perhaps of his own, among the most illustrious actions of his life. It may also be unknown to your Grace that another political personage in that reign, and one, too, whose early prejudices in favour of episcopal wealth and patronage might naturally be supposed to have been strongly confirmed by all the power of habit, all the authority of example, and all the allurements of honour and interest, has not hesitated to say, "That if the lands belonging to the deans and chapters, who are of no more use, either to the church or state, than abbots and monks, were divided among the poorer clergy, there would be no just cause of complaint, unless that bishops' daughters would

expected. It is also mentioned in the book just referred to, and which I believe is so scarce that a copy is not to be found in that great repository of English history, the British Museum, that Bishop Burnet was the supposed adviser of this measure. And there is strong collateral evidence of this being the case, from his looking forward, as we find in various passages of his writings, to the next age, for great changes, civil as well as religious.

not go off so well as they now do with a good sinecure." This is pretty well in a tory lord, and an avowed champion of the state religion. But the spirit of reform in its pristine vigour surely manifests itself still more in Lord Dartmouth, for I am here quoting his own words, when he goes on recklessly to declare—" And so if bishops themselves were brought to an equality of revenue, as well as function, it would prevent the great scandal given by commendams and translations, that are daily increasing. But it is to be hoped," adds his lordship, "that the legislature will think proper, some time or other, to put them under a better regulation *." I have

*If these opinions had been known to Bishop Watson, with what an air of triumph would he have cited them in his celebrated Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on ecclesiastical Reform! It would appear from Dr. King, the Tory, that the maxim of the Roman satirist, "Money at any rate," seems not to have met with its due share of reprobation from many of the prelatical order in the times immediately succeeding those of Lord Dartmouth. "I know nothing," says that learned divine, "that has brought so great a reproach on the Church of England as the avarice and ambition of our bishops. Chandler, Bishop of Durham, Willis, Bishop of Winchester, Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury, Gibson and Sherlock, Bishops of London, all died shamefully rich, some

momentarily thought, when I read these two passages, that they were the words of Bishop Burnet, who passed for such a root and branch reformer in his day, and not those of Lord Dartmouth upon the Bishop's History of his own Times*, so ill do they accord with the

of them worth more than 100,000l."—Anecdotes of his own Times, p. 184. What a noble contrast to this selfish feeling of amassment is afforded by Bishop Burnet, and what a right and awful impression had he of the high vocation to which he was appointed, when he declared, that he should think himself guilty of the greatest crime if he were to raise fortunes for his children out of the revenues of his bishopric! and, therefore, though he had a large family when he died, three sons and two daughters, yet he left them nothing more than their mother's fortune. Ibid. p. 185.

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* Oxford edition, vol. ii. p. 118. Had Lord Dartmouth, however, in his capacity of secretary of state, ventured to suggest to his colleagues in office, that either of the foregoing notions should be adopted, it would have amounted, in the eyes of his orthodox mistress, not only to an abandonment of all principle, but even to a species of high treason. Not even Mrs. Freeman, when her influence was at the highest with her dear friend Mrs. Morley, would have presumed to recommend the division of dean and chapter lands among the parochial clergy, however she might dare to brave and brow-beat her, under the colourable plea of supporting with effect the assigned character of an equal. "Morley and Freeman were the names her fancy

otherwise high church feelings and sentiments of the noble writer *.

hit upon; and she left me to choose by which of them I would be called. My frank open temper naturally led me to pitch upon Freeman, and so the princess took the other; and from this time Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman began to converse as equals, made so by affection and sentiment." See an account of the Duchess of Marlborough, from her first coming to court in the year 1710, in a letter from herself to Lord L., p. 14.

* My meaning here is misconceived, if it be thought that these quotations were introduced for any other purpose than simply to show, that men who were high Tories in principle, and great advocates for church and state, felt no scruples in pointing out those things which they thought needed improvement in the former. My own opinion is, that the equalization of bishoprics is an impracticable measure for years to come. Within half a century, I presume to prophesy, it may not be so. But even then, he who would propose the experiment of making a diminution in the revenues of the two Primacies, or the see of London, will prove himself more desirous of forming a coalition with prejudice than reason. The reader will find in the Appendix what I consider as the best substitute for that chief desideratum. With respect to the other position of Lord Dartmouth, contained in the last of the foregoing extracts, viz. the good which would result to the church from the abolition of deans and chapters, I profess to take a very different view from his lordship on this subject. But more of this in a fitter place.

Since those times a mighty shift, to use the builders' phrase, has taken place in the religious knowledge, manners, opinions, and circumstances of the people of this country. Few things are clearer, than that the Church of England, as a national church, is now based on public opinion; by which expression I understand the honest and independent sentiments of a great and enlightened people. The very existence of the church is indeed as much supported by public opinion, as by the privilege of the law and the patronage of the state. Paley long ago said, "That to make of the church an engine or even ally of the state serves only to debase the institution, as the single end to be proposed by an ecclesiastical establishment is the preservation and communication of religious knowledge." While Burke, before him, in speaking of the doctrine of this said famous conjugal connexion, calls it "an idle and fanciful speculation." True also it is, that the prevailing sentiments of the clergy have, for some time declared the stability of

the church to consist in the scripturality and purity of its worship, and good works among the people. The famous alliance, therefore, between church and state, once so powerfully advocated by the great Warburton, is now regarded (and justly so, by those who hold that the Church of England ceases not to be the church of Christ because it is the religion of the state) as a low-minded and revolting alliance; not very dissimilar in its effects to the degrading connexion between the master and his slave, in which the latter is ruled over so despotically, that upon the slightest infringement of the unconditional obedience exacted for the protection extended towards him, he is liable to be left at a moment's notice helpless and hopeless; whereas, from the cause of the Gospel being a common cause, in which laity and clergy are mutually and equally concerned, so ought the alliance between church and state to partake of such a character of holy sublime union as to have no separate interest or existence, because the

former sanctifies and gives a sort of perpetuity to the latter; and therefore its essential element ought to consist in the promotion, not only of the social, political, and moral, but eternal welfare of the human species.

Had Warburton then consulted more attentively his favourite Hooker, before he framed his celebrated hypothesis, he would not have fallen into those glaring fallacies and inconsistencies which the least practised and skilful disputant is competent to detect, and which often growso unmanageable that he cannot overcome them by all his force of argumentation. But though I would indignantly protest against the church resting upon the little narrow foundations where the bishop supposes it to be placed, yet I cannot think, as some are inclined to do*, that his showy but flimsy scheme is overthrown by this single passage of Hooker: "When we speak of the commonwealth se-

^{*} So opines, if I mistake not, the very able writer of the article on Church Reform, in the 12th number of the British Critic, p. 289.

parately, we speak of the community with reference to the public affairs thereof, religion excepted; and by the church we mean the same society with reference solely to religion. The two words, indeed, import things different. And those are accidents which may, and always should, dwell lovingly together in one subject*." Now many, when this great man wrote, were members of the commonwealth, without being members of the established church. And if it be answered, that he must be understood to speak of the Church of Christ generally, I reply that this is not a society in the sense he and Warburton use the term; in addition to which, too, it may be observed, that men might be citizens without being Christians; as is the case with the Jews, and was eminently so in the Roman empire under Constantine.

To make, then, that mighty power, public opinion, operate strenuously on the side of the establishment, I would invite your Grace's

^{*} Book viii.

attention to a species of reform which proposes to change as little as possible, but correct as much; so that, under this mode of proceeding, your Grace might rectify or improve with the same facility as the universities have from time to time altered their statutes, and with no more dread of stirring up questions of difficult attainment than of restoring the dark and superstitious ages.

That wisest and most instructive of writers, Bacon, in a tract written about the year 1603, and which exhibits all his characteristic ardour of improvement, emphatically asks, "Why the civil state should be purged and restored by good and wholesome laws made every three or four years in parliament assembled, devising remedies as fast as time breedeth mischief, and, contrariwise, the ecclesiastical state should continue upon the dregs of time, and receive no alteration now for these forty-five years or more?" And, "in these days of trouble and rebuke," is it not especially incumbent upon our ecclesiastical governors to note from time

to time, according to the progress of reason and knowledge, what failures in practice are to be found in their system? In contending strongly that the good order and well-being of the church require this at their hands, let me not, however, be confounded among those half-learned and half-wise persons who are infected with an overweening contempt of whatever is ancient or established: let me not appear even for a moment to forget that authorized changes in religion require long investigation, minute inquiry and mature reflection, great knowledge of past and present events, a deep insight into future consequences, and impartial weighing of the good and evil of the system proposed to be amended. Yet at the same time be it observed, that indiscriminate invectives against purifying and rational innovations are equally puerile and contemptible. Those who are "too fond of the ancient order of things" would do well to remember, that what is now establishment was once innovation; that what we denominate antiquity was, in fact, the youth or infancy of the world.

But, in spite of these obvious truths, there is, it must be fairly acknowledged, a general distrust of all those who advocate reforms in age-hallowed establishments of any sort, especially church establishments. Whether from the natural bias of the mind being more in favour of precedent than novelty; from the prejudice of habit and education, which induce men to consider those regulations just and expedient of which their forefathers had approved; or from reforms being likely to give a handle to turbulent and ruthless spirits to engender that strife, bitterness, and animosity, of which no one can foresee the termination; certain it is, that, upon these several accounts, he who would countenance any momentous reform must expect to shock the prejudices, as much as he will be thought to oppose the interests, of many individuals whom he may personally respect, and seldom or never to triumph over this vast weight of prejudice and clashing interests, but by slow degrees and a long tedious struggle. A full conviction of these things unquestionably is not calculated to render my task a very pleasant or easy one. Nothing truly but a high concern for the Protestant establishment of England, and the belief that no time is more favourable than the present for safely agitating the discussion of a measure of such paramount importance as a comprehensive church reform, could have forced me to engage in it.

In the proposed amendments which I shall have to submit to your Grace's consideration, I trust it will be taken as a proof of the sincerity of my motives, that I pledge myself, in the course of my statements, to adduce no grievance, to notice no defect, which I cannot report from personal observation and clear and hearty belief, or upon the authority of those whose qualifications for forming right views of the practical result of this measure stand high among the highest. Conscious, however, as I am of the warmest attachment

to the church, I cannot stoop to the mean dissimulation of expressing an unqualified approbation of every thing appertaining to it. Not a tittle of her revenues, dignity, or splendour would I put into jeopardy; but to preserve all these, to protect them alike from fanatical sectarianism and godless liberalism, I would urge the work of further amendment and correction—her best, I had almost said her only, safeguard against present and future dangers. Those admirable men, who enabled England to throw off the yoke of papal domination, bequeathed to us, together with their reform, the spirit and exhortation to contend with all our heart, and with all our mind, for the further advancement of it. They never for a moment dreamt that human nature was advanced to the highest degree of moral or religious perfection: they never could wilfully have closed their eyes to the conviction, that the most striking feature in it is its susceptibility of improvement.

Now, with all veneration for the memory

of Cranmer, Ridley, Parker, Jewell, I must frankly declare, though it may pass for a species of heresy with some, that, in my judgment, there are among those who now sit on the episcopal bench men as eminently calculated for completing, as those worthies were for commencing, the great and glorious work of the Reformation; since the prelates I have in my thoughts whilst writing this sentence (it would be invidious to mention their names) are as full of that Christian patriotism which divests itself of all personal views, as they are firm in purpose, acute in argument, deep in learning, and orthodox in temper, as well as orthodox in belief. It is, therefore, devoutly to be wished, that those right reverend persons who, from living in an age fraught with the accumulated advantages afforded by the progressive advancement of learning and science, are, in so many respects, even far the superiors to the reforming bishops of Edward and Elizabeth, will show their anxiety here to meet the laity upon common ground, for

the sake of securing the spiritual welfare of the whole; will, I say, from knowing how much a church reform is desiderated by that body, more especially by the learned, conscientious, and active part of it, not suffer themselves to be deterred, by any apprehensions of being stigmatized as ecclesiastical latitudinarians, from obtaining their country's gratitude and reverence, by surveying the church as it at present stands; and after they have taken a deliberate and distinct view of the existing system, bending the whole force and faculties of their minds to make that change in it which shall not be merely good in theory, but as wise in practice. No man surely can think seriously for ten minutes on this subject, without being convinced that the true friend of the establishment is not he who conceals, but he who seeks to remedy, its defects. If we wish to preserve the oak of a thousand years, what way more certain is there than to lop off the dead boughs, the superfluous branches? and we shall then see its

massy trunk put forth, for a future age, new and more beautiful foliage, more flourishing blossoms, and more abundant produce.

The sooner too that our ecclesiastical workmen commence their task, the more ready will the religious public be to own the obligation. In their desire to proceed with a cautious wisdom, in a business certainly of the utmost difficulty, as it is of the greatest importance, let them not subject themselves, on the other hand, to the imputation of a want of energy; let them not fear that decision will be mistaken for For, as sure as it is true, however rashness. bigots may frown, and the faint-hearted tremble at imaginary dangers, that times and circumstances, changes of manners and sentiments, freedom of inquiry upon all subjects and among all classes, render an enlightened and moderate church reform not merely necessary, but peremptorily indispensable; so sure is it, that delays in this case are most dangerous. It will not do here to stand still, or to proceed at a tortoise pace. There are

men in this active, stirring, inquiring age, neither few in number, nor small in influence, who, when they see great subjects treated with apathy and indifference, are apt to take them into their own hands; and when that happens, the lessons of history teach us, that their remedies in reform partake of any thing but the character of progressive amelioration.

Happy for the safety and glory of this empire at large it has been, that the energies of your Grace's life have been otherwise spent than in treading the beaten orbit of literature. It can be deemed, then, no disparagement to your talents as a practical statesman, to suppose your acquaintance with ecclesiastical history not commensurate with your political wisdom; and, therefore, to conclude, that when so apparently a well informed theologian as the late Earl of Liverpool could fall into the capital error of asserting, in one of his speeches on the Roman Catholic question, that the Reformation was complete under Elizabeth, because in that reign were passed the two famor

bills, the Act of Supremacy, and the Act of Uniformity, it may be necessary to pioneer the way for your Grace, when I carry you back to periods of our own history remote from those which engage your ordinary attention. Permit me then, as highly essential to the cause I have to advocate, to enter somewhat at length into the nature of the efforts made for a church reform, from the periods of 1536 to 1689, by some of the most pious, able, and exemplary divines that ever adorned the Anglican church, and to show how their excellent designs were by party spirit crippled and mutilated, and at last entirely defeated.

It is a nice distinction of the learned and sagacious Mosheim, that the Anglican church is to be described as that correction of the old religion which equally separates us from the Roman Catholics, and from the other Protestant communities which have snapped the papal chains*.

^{*} Illa religionis veteris correctio, quæ Britannos æque a pontificiis, atque a reliquis familiis, quæ pontificis dominationi renuntiarunt, sejungit.—Instit. Eccles. Sæc. xvi. Sect. iii. pars 11. p. 776.

Nor is this remark of his less founded on truth that the ecclesiastical polity of this country has never yet been accurately settled*. In confirmation of the first position, it may be observed, that our national church builds all substantial points of faith on the warranty of Scripture alone, and herein she differs from the Romish church. In the preface, for example, to the Book of Common Prayer, concerning the service of the church, we are enjoined to search out, by the ancient fathers, "for the original and ground of divine service." In the same preface, the godly and decent order of the ancient fathers† is referred to as

^{*} Sæc. xvi. Sect. xxxi.

⁺ By a canon in the year 1571, when our articles were first authorized by act of parliament, it is provided, "that preachers shall not presume to deliver any thing from the pulpit, as of moment to be religiously observed and believed by the people, but that which is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, and collected out of the same doctrine by the catholic fathers and the bishops of the ancient church." "A wise regulation," observes Waterland, "formed with exquisite judgment, and worded with the exactest caution. The canon does not order, that they shall teach whatever had been taught by the fathers; no,

the standard of our worship. And thus, by retaining the discipline and polity of apostolical truth and order, by inculcating a deep reverence for pious antiquity*, our church herein differs from the reformed churches of every description. With regard to the second statement of the erudite foreigner, there is, as I will show, an accumulation of proofs that the Reformation in this country never was completed.

The name of Henry the Eighth has been handed down to posterity so often with the epithets of liberator and reformer attached to that would have been setting up a new rule of faith: neither does it say, that they shall teach whatsoever the fathers had collected from Scripture; no, that would have been making them infallible interpreters, or infallible reasoners. The doctrine must be found first in Scripture; only, to be more secure that we have found it there, the fathers are to be called in, to be, as it were, constant checks upon the presumption or wantonness of private interpretation."—See the Works of D. Waterland, D.D., Oxford edition, vol. v. pp. 317, 318.

* Quod si me conjectura non fallit, totius reformationis pars integerrima est in Anglia, ubi cum studio veritatis, viget studium antiquitatis.—Casaubon, Epist. ad Salmasium, A.D. 1612. Epist. 837, p. 489.

it, that, to the common reader, it may appear extravagant to say, that though this monarch did much for the overthrow of the papal power in this country, he did little towards the establishment of a Protestant church. In all his various schemes of religion he has clearly evinced, that his quarrel was with the court rather than the church of Rome. By that quarrel he succeeded in centring all the powers of the Roman pontiff in himself; and the great aim of his policy seems to have been, to preserve, under all circumstances, that authority in spirituals which he had acquired; in short, to exhibit himself to his subjects, according to a quaint but emphatical expression of Bacon, "As a king with a pope in his belly." There can be no doubt, however, notwithstanding the capriciousness and inconsistency of Henry's character, that the publication of the following formularies of faith, as substitutes for the authority of the pope and councils in matters of religion, viz., "A Book of Articles devysed by the Kinges Highnes Majestie to stablyshe Christen Quietnes and Unitie, and to avoyde contentious opinions," and "The Institution of a Christian Man," which was afterwards remodelled, under the title of "The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition of every Christian*," greatly contributed to promote the Protestant cause. But when certain historians tell us, that the king intended, just before his death, to make great changes in religion, I must infer, from the risk of decapitation which Queen Catherine Parr incurred, in consequence of urging him to proceed in the reformation of the church, and from his dying a Romanist, that we should have seen the re-establishment, at least in good part, of the ancient faith, by the re-adoption of many of those doctrines and ceremonies of the Romish church he had for a time discarded.

His son, Edward the Sixth, was sincerely inclined to promote the Reformation. But the Roman Catholics still formed a very power-

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^{*} For a full account of these several publications, see Todd's Historical and Critical Introduction.

ful party in his council. Providentially, however, the views and efforts of the majority in it were for the new opinions. Cranmer, as archbishop of Canterbury, had the principal or sole direction of the church affairs during the king's minority. The nation, therefore, had the satisfaction of perceiving wise and effectual measures taken by that zealous prelate towards a legal and fixed settlement of Protestantism. Accordingly we find, that after the drawing up a code of articles of faith for the reformed church of England, the next great improvement in which Cranmer had a chief share was the production of a complete system of Protestant canon law. Fox, the historian, who first published this important and interesting document in the reign of Elizabeth, observes, "I know not in what manner, or on what occasion, the business failed of success; whether by the iniquity of the times, or by the excessive remissness of those to whom it was then committed *."

^{*} Nescio quo modo, quaque occasione res successu ca-

The design, however, was revived in 1549 and 1551. Strype informs us, that thirty-two commissioners, half clerical and half laic, were nominated to carry it into execution. "This was," says he, "a very noble enterprise, and well worthy the thoughts of our excellent archbishop, who, with indefatigable pains, had been, both in this and the last king's reign, labouring to bring the matter about; and he did his part, for he brought the work to perfection. But it wanted the king's ratification, which was delayed partly by business and partly by enemies*." Edward's death in the meantime took place, and the matter was never again renewed. Bishop Burnet, in the fulness of his admiration of this venerable monument of our Reformation, breaks out into the following ejaculation: "God grant that a time may come, in which that noble design, so near being perfected in ruit, sive temporum iniquitate, sive nimia eorum cessatione, quibus tunc negotium committebatur.—Reform. Leg. Ec-

cles. Præf. ad Lectorem.

^{*} Mem. of Arch. Cranmer, b. xi. c. xxvi.

King Edward the Sixth's reign, of the reformatio legum ecclesiasticarum, may be revived and established *!"

By the restoration of popery under Mary, the clergy and the church were equally threatened with destruction. It appears to have been the determination of this bigoted woman never to rest satisfied till by means both coercive and persuasive, she had produced entire submissiveness to the popish interests from the whole body of the people. In proof of which, it may be sufficient to state, that, on summoning a parliament, she caused a bill to be sent from the Lords to the Commons early in the session, repealing all her brother's acts respecting religion †. A hard struggle was made against this bill, but after six days' discussion it was passed. So decisive a reaction had then taken place in favour of the old religion, that its adherents began to flatter themselves that even all traces

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^{*} History of his own Times, Conclusion.

⁺ Hume's Hist. of England, vol. iv. p. 379.

of "the new learning*" would soon be obliterated.

The jarring elements of passions and prejudices which surrounded the throne of Elizabeth when she first mounted it are well known to the student of ecclesiastical history. The puritan in the church, and the puritan out of it, expressed their visionary fears, that the queen would publicly recognize the Romish church. The Papists, on the other hand, looked for her open and formal separation from it; while the Protestants apprehended, from her indications of a favourable mind towards many popish ceremonies, practices, and doctrines†, that she was more a Protestant

^{* &}quot;The modest phrase," says Burnet, "by which they termed the reformation."—Hist. Reform. vol. i. p. 652.

[†] Her attachment to images, lighted tapers, and crucifixes (this last liking will not perhaps seem very objectionable to protestant feelings), and her injunctions that no priest should be married except he had the consent of his bishop, two neighbouring justices, and the woman's parents, (see Sparrow's Collect. xxix. p. 76,) together with her attempts to forbid all clerical marriages, in which she would probably have carried her point, if Cecil, as Strype says in his Life of Archbishop Parker, p. 107, had not been stiff at this juncture, are such

by profession than in principle; and that though she had reinstated the church in the same condition in which it was at the death of her brother, yet that restoration was made, not from any genuine feelings of attachment towards the new religion, but on grounds of general expediency; from a conviction, in short, that the security of her throne was identified with the re-establishment of the reformed religion. Collier, in drawing a comparison between Mary and Elizabeth, says, "The one made martyrs, the other made bishops; the one executed the men, the other the estates; and, therefore, reserving the honour of the Reformation to Queen Elizabeth. the question will be, whether the resuming. the first fruits and tenths, putting many vicar-

apparent evidences of a papistical spirit, that we are not surprised at meeting with assumptions like the following: "It was but in her reign a mixed reformation, part evangelical in doctrine, and in part politic in worship and discipline. And that same policy which was intended to bring Papists to us, hath been very near drawing us back to Somers Tracts, vol. ix. p. 504.

ages in a deplorable condition, and settling a perpetuity of poverty on the church, was not much more prejudicial than fire and faggot; whether destroying bishoprics was not a much greater hardship than the destroying bishops, because this severity affects succession, and reaches down to future ages; and lastly, whether, as the world goes, it is not more easy to recruit bishops than the revenues to support them *."

Perfectly extravagant as this passage is, it must be confessed, that in Elizabeth's profuse transfer of ecclesiastical property to laymen, the lust of confiscation was more evident than the design of promoting the ends of true religion by banishing popery. Admitting, then, her conduct here to be oppressive and unprincipled, yet still I would say, that, in most other respects, a species of moderatism appeared to be the shibboleth of her policy. In all divisions of religious opinions among the leading parties of the

^{*} Eccles. Hist. of Great Britain, fol. 671.

state, there was an affected ostentation of not giving the preference to any of them. On her accession to the throne, for example, she retained fourteen of her father's popish counsellors, and balanced them by no more than eight of her own church; in which measure, perhaps, there was much sound wisdom and prudence, considering that the popish faction had at that period the whole authority of the church and state in their hands, and Ireland also, ever prone to rebellion, at their devotion *.

But though this moderatism might be deemed a prominent feature in the queen's policy, particularly at the commencement of her reign, she laid it quite aside in establishing this point—that the sovereign of these realms should be acknowledged the supreme head of the church, and sole arbiter in matters both of doctrine and discipline. So bent indeed was this otherwise cautious princess on

^{*} In confirmation of the foregoing remarks, see Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation, vol. ii. pp. 753. 762, vol. iii. p. 519.

becoming, not only the defender, but the sole director, of her people's faith; so completely did she make her church-reforming spirit subservient to the desire of establishing her prerogative in all matters connected with the church, that I should be almost inclined to subscribe to the opinion of Dr. Lamb, that the contested clause in the twentieth article, "the church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in matters of faith," was added by Cecil at her suggestion*, if I did not think there were stronger grounds for believing, that Archbishop Parker proposed the clause to the convocation, who rejected it, perhaps in some measure, from apprehension that the queen would claim too much authority, or else because it might give an apparent advantage to the Roman Catholics. I suspect, however, as Dr. Lamb does, that the privy council caused it to be inserted in the second edition, by the queen's printer, Wolfe, in 1563;

^{*} An Historical Account of the Thirty-nine Articles, pp. 34, 35.

though this hypothesis, be it observed, involves not the admission that Parker was concerned in the transaction.

We cannot, therefore, greatly wonder that this child of the Reformation, as she has been called, should not have pushed on "the godly change" to the height to which many of her zealous protestant subjects wished to carry it; but, on the contrary, should have thought it would best answer her purpose, to keep the people as much as she could from the discussion of all matters which had an immediate bearing upon religion.

In his way to London, to take possession of his new kingdom, James was met by the puritan clergy, who presented to him the famous Millenary petition*, flattering themselves that the successor of Elizabeth would turn a gracious ear to their requests, from some strong

^{*} It was so called because a thousand signatures were said to have been put to it. But, in point of fact, the petition was subscribed by no more than eight hundred and twenty-five ministers, from twenty-five counties. See Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. ii. p. 5.

expressions which he had formerly used, of his adherence "to the purest kirk on earth*."

* The reasons which led them to form these expectations were surely none of the strongest, if they remembered the bitter and sarcastic terms in which he railed against their sect, three years before, in his Basilicon Doron, or instructions of the king to his son, Prince Henry. Among the propositions in this book are the following: "That no man is to be more hated of a king than a proud puritan; that puritans had been a pest to the commonwealth and church of Scotland, wished to bring in democracy, and quarrelled with the king because he was a king." Upon the discovery, however, that these sentiments were not very palatable to this class of his subjects, he published an edition of the Doron, in which he sought to palliate the indecency of his invectives against the presbyterian ministers, by protesting that he equally loved and honoured the learned and grave men of either of these opinions, meaning thereby the episcopalians and puritans. But how little scrupulous James was of degrading the dignity of his exalted station by an egregious falsehood, the following declaration of his, in another part of his work, places beyond all doubt: "That bishops ought to be in the church, I ever maintained as an apostolic institution, and so the ordinance of God: so was I ever an enemie to the confus'd anarchie or purity of the puritans, as well appeareth in my Basilicon Doron; I, that, in my said book to my son, do speak ten times more bitterly of them (the puritans) nor of papists; I, that for the space of six years before my coming into England laboured nothing so much as to depresse their partie, and re-erect bishops again."—Premonition to the Apology for the Oath of Allegiance, pp. 44, 45.

It was entitled, "The humble Petition of certain Ministers of the Church of England, desiring Reformation of sundry Ceremonies and Abuses." Its preamble professed, that neither as factious men, affecting a popular purity in the church, nor as schismatics, aiming at the dissolution of the state, but as the faithful ministers of Christ, and loyal subjects to the king, they threw themselves at his feet for relief, affirming that they groaned under the burden of human rites and ceremonies. Their grievances were comprised under four heads: first, with respect to the liturgy; secondly, concerning ministers; thirdly, about church livings; and lastly, on church discipline. The result of this petition was the celebrated Hampton Court conference.

James eagerly seized this opportunity afforded him of having a further debate, in order to astonish the bishops and lords of his council by a display of his theological talents; and so far, it appears, he was eminently successful. The archbishop of Canterbury declared, that his

majesty spoke by the special assistance of God's spirit; and the bishop of London protested, "that his soul melted within him to hear a king, the like of whom had not been since the time of Christ;" while the lord chancellor, determined not to be outdone by these prelates, in the language of interested adulation, exclaimed, "that he had never seen the king and priest so completely united in the same person*." The Millenary petitioners, however, gathered from the harangues of the royal pedant, that he was more intent upon exercising an arbitrary swayover men's consciences, than on searching out or correcting what was amiss in the administration of the ecclesiastical system.

The king made a great boast of having "peppered them well" by his superior logic and learning. See Hearne's Titus Livius, p. 197. But according to Harrington, who was a spectator of the polemical scene, "He rather used upbraidings than arguments;" and he dryly adds, "The bishops seemed much pleased, and said his Majesty spoke by the power of the inspiration. I wist not what they mean, but the spirit was rather foul-mouthed."—Nugæ Antiquæ, vol. i. p. 18.

Laud and Buckeridge have pronounced James "to be the most able prince that ever this kingdom had to judge of church work *;" but good men of all creeds would have thought their decision entitled to more respect, had he sought, on this occasion, to conquer by kindness, to heal the wounds of the church, which a prince of less erudition, but of more tact and insight into the signs of the times, would have done, by conceding as much as possible to the spirit of religious reform, especially where it was not injurious † to the hierarchy, but beneficial to the pure Christian religion ‡. Instead

^{*} See dedication of Bishop Andrewes' Sermons to Charles I., by Bishops Laud and Buckeridge.

[†] I would be understood as applying this remark solely to the wish of the puritans, for the abridgment of the service, the amendment of ecclesiastical courts, the existing form of subscription, the more strict observance of the Sabbath, and a preaching ministry. I think it not superfluous here to add, that the rejection of the Lambeth articles, which Reynolds wished to be appended to the Thirty-nine, can be a matter of regret only to those churchmen who adhere to the doctrine of Calvin.

[‡] James, however, so far from endeavouring to prevent a sect from becoming a political faction, seems to have had a secret pleasure in insulting their religious feelings, as

of which, this Solomon of his age, deeming himself wiser than the whole of the non-conformist party, though at the head of it was Dr. Reynolds, allowed both by churchman and sectarian to be the most learned man in the kingdom*, closed the conference, after it had

much in his first speech to parliament, as he did in this conference. "For in that speech he not only massed together imprudently, as well as unjustly, all the dissenters from the established church, under the general denomination of puritans and novelists, but he declared them all unsufferable in any well grounded commonwealth; so that he put them all out of his protection, even though they confined themselves within those bounds to which causes of conscience may reasonably extend, and proscribed them for their opinions, not their practices."—See Oldcastle's Remarks on the History of England, p. 280, 281.

* He was president of Corpus Christi College in Oxford. Surprising things are related of his memory and reading; but at this conference he did not equal the expectations of his admirers, being deemed by them wanting in that prompt and courageous spirit of independence which they anticipated he would have shown as a minister of the Gospel. Neal, in alluding to the failure of their champion, says, "Thus ended this mock conference, for it deserves no better name; all things being concluded privately between the king and the bishops, before the puritans were brought upon the stage, to be made a spectacle to their enemies, and borne down, not with calm reason and argument, but with the royal authority—I approve or dissent; the king making

lasted three days, by saying to the doctor, with a scorn, mingled with a spirit of the grossest intolerance—"If this be all that your party have to say, I will make them conform, or I will hurry them out of the land, or else

himself both judge and party. No wonder, therefore, if Dr. Reynolds fell below himself, and lost some part of his esteem with the puritans, being overawed by the place, and the company, and his sovereign opponent."-Hist. of the Puritans, vol. ii. p. 20. Respecting the real views and sentiments of Reynolds there seems to be a difference of opinion, even among the writers of the church party. Collier says, "As for Dr. Reynolds, he made it his business to read against the hierarchy, and to weaken the authority of the bishops."-Fuller, on the other hand, positively asserts, "that his disaffection to the discipline established in England was not so great as some bishops did suspect, or as some nonconformists did believe." No doubt, he desired the abolishing of some ceremonies, for the care of the conscience of others, to which in his own practice he did willingly submit, constantly wearing hood and surplice, and kneeling at the sacrament." There must, indeed, have been a considerable bias on the part of Reynolds in favour of the church doctrine and discipline, if the singular anecdote related of him by Fuller be true, that on his deathbed, at his own request, he received absolution according to the Church of England. "He received it," says the church historian, "from Dr. Holland, whose hand he affectionately kissed, in expression of the joy he received thereby."--Church Hist.

worse*." In the shape, then, of reform or amendment, nothing of high importance was effected in the reign of James but a new translation of the Bible †, our present one; and for that great benefit we are certainly indebted to the Hampton Court conference ‡.

* That this was not a mere threat, thrown out in the heat of debate and afterwards forgotten, but on the contrary was intended to inspire an efficient terror, is sufficiently evidenced, from ten of the petitioners being afterwards, in flagrant violation of their civil rights, committed to prison; the judges, in their temporizing compliances with the tyranny of James, laying down this rule in the Star-chamber as established law,—that the petition was an offence fineable at discretion, and approximate to treason and felony, as it tended to sedition and rebellion.—See Hallam, Const. Hist. vol. i. p. 321.

† This was the proposal of Reynolds; to which James assented, on condition that there should be no marginal notes,—observing, and justly so, that of all translations, the Genevan was the worst, as being dangerous to the quiescence of society, from its justifying rebellion against kings.—See Carwithen's History of the Church of England, vol. ii. p. 200. When the Bishop of Salisbury, in his valuable work, entitled "The Bible, and Nothing but the Bible, the Religion of the Church of England," asserts that "the omission of notes by King James's translators was not a rejection or reprobation of notes and comments," I think that his lordship must have overlooked this important fact.

‡ A writer of the day accuses the ministers of the bounds,

There was no room left for grave and full deliberation of amendment in church discipline, in the tempestuous days of the great rebellion, when fanatic zeal, under the various

as he terms the presbyterians, of wishing "utterlie to overthrow the bishops."-See Apologie for Prelacy, Lond., no date, p. 3. Nothing, however, could be farther from their intention than to strike at the root of episcopal authority, as may be clearly shown from the following passage, in a treatise, published after the Hampton Court conference, by Dr. Sparkes, one of the advocates for the nonconformists, and which he entitled "A Brotherly Persuasion to Unitie and Uniformitie in Judgment and Practice, touching the received and present Ecclesiasticall Government, and the authorized Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England," 4to. 1607. "I may, with a safe and good conscience, both before God and man, proteste, that I never yet could bee brought, by any thing that I have ever heard or read to that purpose, these four and thirtie years, that I have been in the ministerie, (and yet I thinke I have read most, if not all that hath beene since written to that ende), eyther to thinke that forme and plott of church-government, so much admired and magnifyed as the perpetual and onely fit government for Christe's Church, by a paritie of ministers and their presbiteries, eyther fitting for such a monarchye as this is, or any way indeede so aunsweerable or conformable to the perpetual government used by God for and in his church, eyther since Moses or Christ, during the storie, eyther of Newe Testament or Olde, as this by archbishopps, bishoppes, and pastors of ours is."

forms of Protestantism, defaced our church with brutal violence, and made a merit of trampling upon the service of the Book of Common Prayer. Sunk, however, as the government was at last in a complete military despotism by Cromwell, yet there are feelings of the noblest kind that the usurper awakens in the heart, although he so often preferred the pleasures of oppression to those of popularity, when he made himself the soul and conductor of the Protestant cause throughout Europe, and projected the design of a council for the Protestant religion, in opposition to the congregation, de propaganda fide*.

The conference held at the Savoy in May, 1661, between twenty-one Anglican and as many presbyterian ministers, presented a fair opportunity, not only for well-conducted revisions of religious ceremonies and the liturgy, but also for rendering temporary in its duration that schism and separation so fatal to the

^{*} Burnet's Hist. of his own Times, vol. i. p. 132.

preservation of public tranquillity. But the episcopalians, scarcely recovered from the galling effects of recent indignities and wrongs, from a fresh and feeling recollection of their sufferings under the puritans, were unfortunately not disposed to take large and just views of their duties from religion; and therefore considered it as detrimental to the safety of the ecclesiastical system, to make the experiment of conciliating the presbyterians. Sheldon, then bishop of London, and who is described by Burnet as being a better politician than divine, treated them with a degree of derision * and contempt which seemed to

^{*} It was the saying of Sir F. Wenman, that Sheldon was born and bred to be Archbishop of Canterbury.— See note of the editor of Burnet's History of his own Times, vol. i. p. 421. But it surely was not in good taste, to use the phrase of the day, for the primate of all England to make the preaching and gesticulations of the puritans, whatever imperfections might have belonged to either, the subject of profane merriment at Lambeth Palace. "1600, May 14. At noon to dinner with Mr. Wren to Lambeth, with the Archbishop of Canterbury; the first time I was ever there, and I longed for it. Where a noble house, and well-furnished with noble pictures and furniture, and noble attend-

prove the superiority of his cause; while he showed his thorough knowledge of the human character, and of the peculiar state of the times in which he lived, when he told them to make all their demands at once. Their compliance with the injunction produced the desired effect; for the number of them raised, as Burnet tells us, "a mighty outcry against them, as people that could never be satisfied *."

ance in good order, and a great deal of company, though an ordinary day, and exceeding great cheer. Most of the company gone, and I going, I heard by a gentleman of a sermon that was to be there; and so I staid to hear it, thinking it serious, till by and by this gentleman told me it was a mockery of one Count Bolton, a very gentlemanlike man, that behind a chair did pray and preach like a presbyter Scot, with all the possible imitation in grimaces and voice. And his text about the hanging up of their harps upon the willows; and a serious good sermon too, exclaiming against bishops, and crying up of my good Lord Eglington, till it made us all burst. But I did wonder to have the bishop at this time to make himself sport with things of this kind; but I perceive it was shown him as a rarity. And he took care to have the room door shut; but there was about twenty gentlemen there, and myself infinitely pleased with the novelty."-Pepys's Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 342.

^{*} Hist. of his own Times, vol. i. p. 309.

The import, unquestionably, of some of their propositions, accompanied as they were with no small cavilling and tergiversation, served to impress upon the minds of the episcopalians strong suspicions of their sincerity, and of some invisible danger still lurking in the sectarian quarters. But it is ever to be deplored, that healing measures should have been defeated by the prejudices, the resentments, and the ill-timed though well-meant zeal of certain individuals of the episcopalian party*. A few more concessions would have

* A church writer upon this conference accuses the famous Pearson of manifesting much lukewarmness in it, merely, I suppose, because he had the good sense and candour to discuss the several topics without arrogance and superciliousness.—See a Short Account of the Savoy Conference, by John Lyford, Lond. 1662, p. 3. Neal, however, does justice to the feelings and faculties displayed by this great man when he remarks, "Of the disputants, 'tis said Dr. Pearson, afterwards Bishop of Chester, disputed accurately, soberly, and calmly. The presbyterian ministers had a great regard for him, and believed that, if he had been an umpire in the controversy, his concessions would have gone a great way."—Hist. of the Puritans, vol. iv. p. 335.

kept such men as Baxter* and Philip Henry in the church; and the greatest of those

* With the fullest admission, however, of honest and benevolent right-mindedness in this highly gifted man, and likewise of the loyalty of his character, notwithstanding the unworthy attempt made at this conference by Stearne, Bishop of Carlisle, to fasten upon him the imputation of republican principles (see an account of this conference, by Baxter, p. 338), yet it must be conceded to the episcopalians, that the singularly injudicious conduct of Baxter chiefly led to the breaking up of the assembly without its producing any very beneficial result. The king's commission gave his party no further power than to compare the Common Prayer Book with the liturgies that had been used in the most primitive and ancient times, "requiring them to avoid as much as possible all unnecessary alterations of the forms and liturgy wherewith the people were altogether acquainted, and had so long received in the church of England." But Baxter assumed to himself the right of making out the boundaries of the change, by composing an entire new liturgy, which he called the reformed liturgy. Now, though there be many thoughts deserving of consideration in this performance, we cannot be in the least surprised at the episcopalians taking great umbrage on his presuming to think that a liturgy drawn up by a single hand in fourteen days was, as Neal says, "to be preferred or stand in competition with one which had been approved by the church for a whole century." That he should have fallen into this fatal error is the more remarkable, because

⁺ See Life of Jeremy Taylor, vol. i. pp. 162, 163.

schisms, as it has been truly remarked by Bishop Heber, "might have been prevented,

he singly opposed himself to the narrow prejudices and heated passions of many members of his sect, when he told them, "that he was not of their mind who charged the Common Prayer with false doctrine or idolatry, or false worship in the matter or substance."—See Silvester's Life of Baxter, p. 308. In his Cure of Church Divisions, pp. 33, 34, Baxter also rebukes those who were so ready, on all occasions, to cast invectives against the form of our church. "We must not model," says he, "the Church of Christ according to our private fancies; we are not the lords of it, or worthy to dispose of it." The works of this eminent divine, for he was no less famed for the rapidity than for the fecundity of his pen, amounted nearly to the astonishing number of two hundred volumes; and some of these were large folios. When Boswell asked the great lexicographer what works of Baxter he should read, his answer was, "Read any of them—they are all good."— Life of Johnson, vol. iv. p. 242. Now, it has been said of the doctor, that he never read a book through. I question much if he even opened Baxter's Treatise of the Grotian Religion: if he had, he would have closed it immediately with disgust, as nothing can be more opposite to the high church principles of Johnson than the opinions expressed in this performance. Archbishop Bramhall's reply to it is a masterpiece of the kind, written with a piercing clearness, which lays open the defectiveness of Baxter's arguments and conclusions to every eye.—See the works of John Bramhall, D. D. Archbishop of Armagh, Dublin, 1677, p. 607.

which destroyed the peace and endangered the existence of the British churches." wish, however, of the bishops to irritate and disgust, rather than to soften the jealousies and to pacify the scruples of the presbyterians, is sufficiently apparent from this single circumstance—that when the latter objected to the number of saints' days, several more were added by the bishops; who likewise inserted the story of Bel and the Dragon, merely because their opponents had assigned unanswerable reasons against apocryphal lessons in the daily service. The only satisfactory alteration, perhaps, to the presbyterians, was the restoring of a rubric against the notion of our Lord's corporeal presence in the holy sacrament, which was inserted in the communion service by Edward the Sixth, but had been left out by Elizabeth, under the plea, as it is alleged, of bringing the Romanists to the communion of the church*. And this, too,

^{*} Burnet, in his History of the Reformation, vol. ii. p. 63, calls this the secret of the omission, which has led

was evidently done by the episcopalians, principally by Bishop Gauden, as Burnet says, more

the author of the Confessional to urge the charge of disingenuous omission against the reformers. There might certainly be a shading or softening on this subject, in compliance with the wish of Elizabeth to have no express definition made against the real presence. But after those lights of the religious world had declared transubstantiation "to be repugnant to the plain words of Scripture—that it overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasions to many superstitions"—and had likewise affirmed he idolatrous nature of the mass, it is surely uncandid and unjust in the highest degree to accuse them of a disposition to temporize, especially when so many martyrs had suffered at the stake for maintaining and holding the doctrine of the real presence; not however such a presence as can be effected only by changing the sacramental elements into the body and blood of Christ, but a real presence, which is in the soul of the communicant. (See the twenty-eighth article, in confirmation of this being the doctrine of our church on the real presence.) Now, I am aware, that in ascribing idolatry, as I have just done, to the church of Rome, I shall be thought not to have paid a proper attention to the nice distinction drawn between the terms idolatry and idolatrous by the late Bishop of Oxford in the debate on the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. But not all the etymological acuteness of that able prelate can persuade me that the former term has been perverted into a support of a very dangerous error, so long as the following rubric is permitted to stand, which so explicitly charges idolatry upon the Roman Catholics: "The sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very

۲.,

with the intention of manifesting their opposition to popery, than to conciliate the presbyterians.

natural substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were idolatry to be abhorred of all Christians." Hume, too, in his appendix to the reign of James the First, remarks, in reference to the specific charge of idolatry advanced against the Roman Catholics by the divines of that period, "that nothing but the imputation of idolatry, which was thrown on the Catholic religion, could justify, in the eyes of the puritans themselves, the schism made by the Hugonots and other Protestants who lived in papal countries." Now, with respect to that part of Bishop Lloyd's speech, in which he asserts that Burnet, decided opponent as he was to popery, denied the justice of applying the term idolatrous to the doctrines of the church of Rome, I must presume that it has been reported inaccurately; as I cannot for a moment suppose that the bishop could have been ignorant, that not only Burnet, but all the tory ecclesiastics in the reign of James the Second, imputed idolatry to the church of Rome. "The approbation of the homilies," says the whig bishop, "is not to be stretched so far as to carry in it a special assent to every particular in that whole volume, but a man must be persuaded of the doctrine that is taught in them. To instance this in one particular: since there are so many of the homilies that charge the church of Rome with idolatry, and that. from so many different topics, no man who thinks that church is not guilty of idolatry, can, with a good conscience, subscribe this article—that the homilies contain a good and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times; for, according to his sense, they contain a false and uncharitable The next and final attempt to remove some imperfections in our ecclesiastical law, and to effect some improvements in the public service of our church, well adapted to the exigencies, and it might have been supposed to the capacities, of the times, (for the principles of toleration were beginning to be better understood then by many of the episcopal clergy) was in 1689; when an especial commission appointed under the great seal, and consisting of ten bishops and twenty divines, was empowered to

charge of idolatry against a church that they think is not guilty of it; and he will be apt to think that this was done to heighten the aversion of the nation to it." Perhaps I shall be reminded that Burnet, in the same article, xxxv, remarks, that if the nation should come to be quite out of danger of falling back into popery, it would not be so necessary to insist upon many of the subjects of the homilies, as it was when they were first prepared. But so long as the members of the church of Rome continued to worship the sacramental elements, I am convinced, from the known sentiments of Burnet on this subject-for they cross us almost in every part of his voluminous writings-that he, of all our bishops, would have been the last to stand forth as the advocate of alterations in the homilies, which should abate or pare away any thing of the charge of idolatrous practice against the papists.

meet, and prepare such alterations in the Book of Common Prayer and canons as might be fit to lay before the convocation. In the place, however, of Tillotson, who was proposed for their prolocutor by Sharp, afterwards Archbishop of York, they thought proper to choose Dr. Jane, regius professor of divinity in Oxford, who had given great offence* to those who were under the guidance of just and liberal principles, by his compliance with existing abuses. A deficiency of practical tact and dexterity in his proceedings on this occasion cannot, however, be imputed to him, since Kennet tells us "he extolled the excellency of the church of England, as established by law, above all Christian communities, and implied that it wanted no amendments; and then ended with

^{*} It appears that he was so much disliked by the students of the university, that though he read admirably against the Socinians, it was difficult sometimes to get a statutable auditory. "He could not," says Calamy, "have been obliged to hold on many times when he had begun to read, had one or two persons withdrawn."—Calamy's Life and Times, vol. i. p. 273.

the application of this sentence by way of triumph—Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*.

Dreading, or affecting to dread, the interference of the state in church affairs, several of the commissioners of the high-church party, who were nominated by the king, either did not appear, or soon withdrew themselves.

Possibly a few of the changes contemplated were of too large and novel a nature; but most of them were characterized by sound wisdom and genuine piety. When one re-

* See Kennet's Complete History, 549. 557. conciliatory language, however, was adopted in the upper house by Compton, Bishop of London, who presided there in the absence of the primate, and a disposition shown to remove, or, at least, to listen to the grievances of Baxter and his party. "We ought," says that prelate, "to endeavour to come to a temper in those things that are not essential in religion, thereby to open a door of salvation to abundance of straying Christians; and it is our duty to show the same indulgence and charity to the dissenters under King William, as some of the bishops and clergy had promised to them under King James."-" And he concluded his speech," says his biographer, "with these words of Joseph to his brethren: Ne tumultuamini in consiliis vestris; thereby exhorting them to unanimity and concord."—See the Life of Bishop Compton, pp. 52, 53.

flects, too, how often controversies in religion are agitated concerning words* rather than things; that to reconcile propositions which seem directly contradictory, little more is required than to understand each party's meaning; and that, in certain leading principles, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, and those of the church of England, are all agreed, to quote the words of Bishop Horsley, it must ever be matter of deep regret, that this favourable opening for reuniting the dissenters to the church should be closed for ever, through those dignitaries whose views upon the most important regulations of policy and religion were

^{*} There is a striking passage in the very able Lectures of the late Dr. Brown on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. ii. p. 453, so appropriate to this assertion, that I must transfer it to these pages:—" In the history of ecclesiastical and civil affairs, what crowd of heretics and political partisans do we find, whom the change of a few letters of the alphabet would have converted into friends, or have reversed their animosities; and Homoousians and Homoiousians, and Tories and Whigs, have reciprocally hated each other, who, but for the invention of the names, would never have known that they differed."

directly opposite to the more enlarged * mind of King William, and whose propensity to a scornful intolerance was so great as even to treat a Stillingfleet, a Patrick, a Sharp, a Beveridge, and a Burnet, as equally schismatic in discipline and unsound in theology.

At the accession of George I., Burnet ventured to indulge the pleasing hope, that the pale of religious communion would be more widely extended, and that those errors and defects in the public service of the church, "which cut the Christian faith into threads," would be happily adjusted. In the third volume of his History of the Reformation, he thus expresses himself in the dedication of it to that illustrious monarch: "Your majesty, we trust, is designed by God to complete the Reformation itself; to rectify what yet may be amiss, and to supply what is defective, among

^{*} His two leading designs were, first, by a comprehension to unite the moderate presbyterians with the church; secondly, by a toleration to give ease to scrupulous consciences. See McCormick's Life of Carstares, p. 43.

us; to oblige us to live and to labour more suitably to our profession; to unite us more firmly among ourselves; to bury, and for ever extinguish, the fears of our relapsing again into popery; and to establish a confidence and a correspondence with the Protestant and Reformed churches abroad." But as every wholesome change in religion and politics is liable to be baffled by events which can neither be controlled nor foreseen by the most sagacious agents of real reformation, so, whether from the torrent of prejudice running strongly against it in the upper and influential classes, or from the weaknesses and vices of the ruling powers, the church of England has gone on from the commencement of the Reformation up to the present time, involving a period of almost three centuries, always manifesting a readiness to listen to those suggestions which have for their main and ultimate end so substantial a good as the increased purity of gospel truth, and so solid a blessing as the moral and religious improvement of the state, but pre-

vented by the interference of party, or other extraneous circumstances, from carrying them Tedious, then, as the foregoing into effect. historical details may have been to your Grace, yet I cannot but consider them as essentially necessary for the formation of a correct opinion, as to whether as much danger will now arise from resisting needful reformation, as from complying with it, and whether or not it be demanded by the probability of success and the plain evidence of necessity; for no one can deny that the outcry for it is loud and general, alike manifested by the speeches in Parliament, the talk of drawing-rooms and of the streets.

The schoolmaster then is abroad: a sentence pronounced with as much fear and trembling by some, as if the church were to be pulled down by his doings. The bare possibility of such a catastrophe might perhaps be contemplated, if the king, the two houses of Parliament, and the commonalty of the land, considered the church merely as convenient, but not essen-

tial, to the state; if church and state were not terms so perpetually associated together, that their separation would mean not reform but revolution; if the former, among its various uses, were not acknowledged "as a type of the rock of ages," presenting a durable barrier against the inroads of vulgar and unblushing fanaticism of every kind (it being admitted by the wisest and best of the dissenters, that if political power is to be granted to any one class of Christians, they would feel most secure under the mild and tolerant supremacy of the church); and if, whenever that church was supposed to be in danger, multitudes from the north, and from the south, from the east, and from the west, did not rally around her with an increase of attachment.

Mr. Hume himself—not he whose passion for sweeping legislation would find fresh resources for the government in seizing upon the church revenues in Ireland, episcopal and clerical, but the mighty of intellect, the great historian—even he has said,

that, "for the noble virtues of humanity, meekness, and moderation, very many of the clergy are beholden not more to nature or reflection than to the genius of their calling *." If this be the character given of some of them by him who cannot be accused of throwing the weight of his authority on the side of the Christian priesthood, would he not say, had Providence cast his birth in these days, that never, since the church of England was established by the law of the land, did the general body of the clergy "walk more worthy of their vocation;" never did they display more zeal with knowledge, or knowledge with moderation; never, in short, were they more efficient in professional qualifications—in learning, talents, indefatigableness, purity of morals, sound faith, and sincere piety +; and, therefore, never more sure,

^{*} See Essay on National Characters, Note I.

⁺ To justify this observation, we have only to compare the following picture, drawn by no unfriendly hand, of the conduct—pastoral, professional, and private—of the dignified and parochial clergy of the seventeenth century, with that exhibited by those of the establishment in the present times:

by these resistless moral instruments, of coming off victorious in this age of panics and frenzies?

"It was complained that they were, moreover, faulty in their morals; that they gave not due attendance to their office; and that some of the dignified clergy had cures more than one apiece, which were inconsistent with that duty they did owe to the mother church, and against the ecclesiastical canons. Nay, it was even publicly represented by the most hearty friends of what was then called the 'constitution,' that others belonging to the church were often seen in alehouses and taverns, and to be in great disorder through their intemperance; that not a few of them were newsmongers and busy-bodies; that those presbyters whom the bishops ought to consult with were generally absent from the church, and the archdeacons, which are to be in their eyes, were in the ends of the earth; that some of them did not so much as live in the diocese, and were so far from visiting parochially, that they did it not at all in person; that they had, indeed, their deputies, who did but little more than dine, call over names, and take their money, that some in the country had two cures, and resided on neither; that others left their own cures, and either became curates to others, or else spent their time in hunting after other preferments in the city—and this, too, though they were well provided for, and under no manner of temptation to poverty; that the catechising of children and servants was now very much disused, and even by those who vaunted not a little of their zeal for the church; that there was not that care which there ought to be in instructing the youth, and preparing them for the holy sacrament of Christ's body and blood; and that, lastly, the preparing of children for

I would say, then, to those who couple all religious and political changes with views and principles hostile to the establishments of the state, and who would therefore consider the whole church as threatened with subversion, by probing, for the purpose of applying a remedy to some of those anomalies in its constitution, which have forced themselves upon general observation by their magnitude—(take, for example, one of these incongruous irregularities—a dean of Durham, having no cure of souls, receives an income from the church* greatly exceeding the episcopal re-

confirmation was extremely neglected, the bare saying some words by rote being as much as was generally done, and sometimes more. These, and a great many more crimes and defaults of the clergy, were complained of publicly in the pamphlets of those times; and that not by enemies, but friends to them, and such as studied chiefly a reformation of the abuses complained of, and which they had promised themselves from the piety of their new king, to whom they were most strongly attached."—Life of Kettlewell, pp. 214—216.

* It has been intimated to me, that I have overrated the amount of the yearly income derived from the deanery of Durham. The communication is entitled to so much atten-

venue of a bishop of Chester, whose diocese comprehends two millions of souls, and stretches from part of Flintshire to White-haven*);—to such I would say,—use that extreme circumspected caution and scrutiny which approves or assents not to any thing unless upon the clearest and most convincing demonstration; but let not your sensitive jealousies carry you so unreasonably far as to make you utter as hideous an outcry, if the outworks of the holy fabric be only

tion, from the quarter from which it came, that it is incumbent upon me to mention in reply, that my informant was a friend of the late Dean Hall; and that I had every reason to conclude that his statement was perfectly correct. When I pointed out the objection of a dean's income quadrupling that of a bishop's, I reasoned solely on the supposition of the possessor of the deanery of Durham being nothing more than a dean,—and as such, a sinecurist,—not a bishop, like the present possessor of the aforesaid deanery, whose merited praise it is to be actively pursuing the line of conduct in his diocese which may best tend to promote its spiritual welfare. In thus saying what is justly due to the prelate to whom I have alluded, I would not in the slightest degree compromise the principle upon which I have argued in the Appendix, as to the system of commendams in general.

^{*} See the Appendix.

touched with a reforming hand, as if its very foundation was to be heaved up, and towers, battlements, and pinnacles, to come toppling down upon our heads. It is, indeed, a downright libel upon our church, to suppose that she is so afraid of the very name of reform, as to hold it synonymous with swift and sweeping destruction. What has she to fear from those reforms which would recommend themselves to our reason by their fitness?—and none other would be suggested by constitutional statesmen, of whatever party, and by sober and impartial observers of the marks and signs of the times. A pure and apostolic church, standing on the broad and solid basis of a people's love, because they believe her doctrines are true, her pretensions moderate, and her exhortations useful, can no more be endangered by the alteration or removal of some portion of it here and there, in order to introduce new materials, or better workmanship, than the heavens can be set on fire by the sparkles that arise in the air, and that die in the moment they ascend.

On casting my eye over the wide field of improvements, which present themselves to me as obvious and easy, in the constitution and discipline of our religious establishment, my first remarks will relate to our Liturgy, or Book of Common Prayer, omitting all mention of the Articles, except where I am compelled incidentally to allude to them; not that I regard them for so perfect a system of doctrine as to need no revision and correction*, that they have no such faults as it would be pos-

* If Chillingworth, who had so conscientiously devoted his powerful faculties to the investigation of truth, was led to exclaim, in that remarkable letter of his to Sheldon, dated 1635, containing his determination not to subscribe to the Thirty-nine articles (which he afterwards, however, did, when chancellor and prebendary of Sarum), "Now I plainly see, if I will not juggle with my conscience, and play with Almighty God, I must forbear;" how slow ought we to be in condemning those who have at different periods loudly contended for the simplifying and shortening of the articles! It is true, that another great master of reasoning, Archbishop Bramhall, has said of Chillingworth, "It may be, that he was not so deeply radicated in the right faith of the English church as many others."—See Schism Guarded, sect. vi. Yet even he, according to the statement of his biographer, "was often heard to declare, that the church was not to be healed but by general propositions; while the primate was celebrated for his distinction between

sible to mend, but on account of their requiring a discussion to which not one, but many judgments are essentially necessary, for the purpose of assisting the understanding to form right views and notions in a matter of such real and serious difficulty; from its involving a combination of prejudices so foreign to common apprehension, and to be surmounted only by minds trained to habits of correct reasoning, and of extensive information.

No one can dispute the intrinsic excellency of the liturgy, without exposing himself to the charge of want of piety, or want of taste. A great many learned men, both in the last century and in this, have esteemed it, in point of composition, incomparably the finest production in the English language without any exception; hardly believing that the language

articles necessary for peace and order, and those that are necessary to salvation."—" When great minds, therefore,' says the writer of a letter to Archbishop Tillotson, on Subscription (Lond. 1690, p. 18), "are doubtful whether, in subscribing to this or that article, they stand on sure ground, little ones may well be perplexed for like reasons."

could have arrived at this beauty, perspicuity, and strength: while some have employed those hyperboles of adoration, which could not be applied with propriety to any human performance, unless it had a fair pretence to perfection*.

Now, the name of George the Third can never be introduced into the page of history, without his unfeigned attachment to the established church of these realms being commemorated and applauded; yet, claiming as our liturgy did his highest reverence, as teaching us in language equally suited to the learned

^{*} I have not met with any encomium upon our liturgy more creditable to the impartiality and judgment of the writer than this: "It is a simple, pure, and noble composition. From the bottom of my soul do I admire it; and, as far as my private feelings are concerned, know of no better form of words for man to hold communion with his Maker. Probably much of it has descended from a very early age of Christianity. However that may be, it is worthy of the best days of Christianity. Bred a dissenter, no early associations prompt this praise; it is the dictate of unbiassed conviction, which, in such a discourse as this, to withhold were uncandid and unjust: like my censures, it is honest and heartfelt."—See Foxe's Lectures, p. 47.

and unlearned, to know the good, and love itto know the bad, and reject it—as tending to make us Christians, not in name and profession only, but in word and deed; yet did this most orthodox of sovereigns complain, in terms direct and decided, of its tedious repetitions. "I don't like," said his Majesty to Dr. Beattie, in the interview with which he honoured him. "repetitions in prayers; and excellent as our liturgy is, I think it faulty in that respect." There are few who will not acknowledge this criticism of our late king to be perfectly just, venerated as this formulary of devotion will be to all time, from its having been prepared originally by protestant reformers, some of whom sealed the truth with their blood; and from its being selected in many parts from the works of the Christian Fathers, and also from the offices of the catholic apostolical church of ancient times*.

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^{*} The liturgy which our church framed for the use of our communion was modelled after the same way that the Lutheran liturgy was, which was partly derived from the

It is well known, to those who are in the least conversant with church history, that the morning service of our church is made up of

Roman missal, or more properly speaking, from the liturgies of Gregory, of Basil, and others, that were composed many centuries before the service of the Romish church had been in existence. (See Bingham's Antiq. upon this subject, book xi. cap. 5.) It is quite an error and delusion, then, to affirm, as some have done, "that our liturgy is almost all Romish." For the better knowledge of those who have imbibed these notions. I would recommend to their notice the following observation of the learned Stillingfleet:-"Calvin and some others did not cease, by letters and other ways, to insinuate that our Reformation was imperfect so long as any of the dregs of popery remained. So they called the use of those ceremonies which they could not deny to have been far more ancient than the great apostacy of the Roman church."—Unreasonableness of Separation, part i. p. 14. While to that class of reasoners who would argue, that the advantages of a liturgy are connected with this principal inconvenience among others; that the forms o prayer composed in one age become unfit for another, b. the unavoidable change of language, circumstances, an opinions (see Gisborne's Moral Philosophy, p. 60); may be confidently replied, though we should not fall with the opinion of a late eminent critic, that the Engli Bible is the completest standard of the English language have at this day (see Lord Monboddo's Origin and P1 gress of Language, vol. ii. p. 141), that our language 1 undergone no such changes as to render that of the litur obscure, harsh, or obsolete.

three distinct services, which were originally designed to be performed at three distinct times*. Were, then, an abridged service for the Sunday morning to be formed out of the three, it would silence all objections against its longsomeness; a complaint first urged against it by men habitually tolerant of tediousness, the millenary petitioners of James the First, and therefore naturally enough repeated in an age like ours, the spirit and character of which demand a more compressed administration of Christianity. What regular church-

^{*} The following observation of Paley is characteristic of his usual candour, and of that strong practical understanding which enabled him to state his religious and political generalizations with such unrivalled method, precision, and simplicity. "The length and repetition complained of in our liturgy, are not so much the fault of the compilers, as the effect of uniting into one service what was originally, but with very little regard to the conveniency of the people, distributed into three. Notwithstanding that dread of innovations in religion, which seems to have become the panic of the age, few, I should suppose, would be displeased with such omissions, abridgments, or change in the arrangement, as the combination of separate services must necessarily require, even supposing each to have been faultless in itself."—Moral Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 60.

man, too, does not recollect how often the morning service is greatly protracted by the delivery of a sermon before the celebration of the holy sacrament, given usually once a month in populous parishes? I take this to be an unanswerable reason, among others, for adopting the proposed suggestion, as being one highly favourable to the increase of congregational habits, and congregational attendance, throughout the mass of the kingdom. Truth is truth, whoever be the speaker; but truth is always doubly recommended when it comes from the lips of the pious and sincere. When we hear, then, persons of both sexes complaining of the tedious length of our morning service—of the extreme difficulty they experience in keeping up a proper degree of attention and devotional feeling in their public intercourse with their God; and these not lukewarm believers, but cordial lovers and conscientious respecters of the Lord's day, from being early imbued with religious impressions, and reverence for our majestic form

of ritual; it is high time to think of remedying an evil of this momentous importance.

This feeling of languor and tedium, at once so painful and wide-spreading, for the lower as well as the middling and upper classes partake in it, is to be regarded, I contend, as a still surer and more impressive argument than any for omitting what is superfluous what has the appearance in the service of the Sunday, of needless repetition; while we retain in its confessions, responses, and prayers, all that is powerfully adapted to furnish appeals to the highest and profoundest sentiments of our nature—to strengthen our faith -to enlarge our charity-to exalt our piety, and to form the mind to just notions of duty, and sound principles of conduct. If there be then such a falling below the standard of their own conceptions, in the performance of their sacred public duties, among those who would wish to indicate to others that they felt them to be a pleasure and not a toil, can we for a moment be surprised, that many

among the aged and the young, the sick or infirm, especially where there has been a defectiveness in their religious training, should express a distaste, at once intense and distressing, to the lengthy but solemn services of the day, arising perhaps as much from physical as moral causes, but equally unpropitious to public decorum, and unfavourable to personal religion?

I assert, also, that it scandalizes all that is christian in the general feelings of the congregation, to have obtruded upon their notice parish papers, acts of parliament, and other secularities, which ought never to be introduced into the temple of the living God. When the mind, for instance, is brought to meditate upon the great truths of revelation; when it is thrown as it were into a new attitude of solemn thought, to have it recalled to earthly objects by declarations like the following from the clerk's desk: That Mr. Such-aone's audit will be holden upon such a day; that A. B. is fined five shillings' worth of

bread, for lopping a tree belonging to C. D.*, when it would be quite sufficient for all the purposes of publicity to have these notices affixed to the church doors, is one of those intolerable nuisances which ought long ago to have been put down by the force of public opinion †.

- * And yet these things are done in the teeth of a rubric which expressly says, "that nothing shall be proclaimed or published in the church, during the time of divine service, but by the minister; nor by him any thing but what is prescribed in the rules of this book, or enjoined by the king, or by the ordinary of the place."
- † There is another practice prevalent in the church, which, when duly weighed by the pious and thinking mind, will appear to call as loudly for reprehension as the one just alluded to. Howell, the famous letter writer, in suggesting to his friend the best methods for preserving a becoming demeanour during divine service, thus exclaims-"I protest I do not love to mingle speech with any about news or worldly negotiations in God's holy house, when the sermon be ended." Were it not, then, a thing of extreme difficulty to put the world and the world's forms out of sight for a few short hours, we should not have the humiliating spectacle presented to us every Sunday, of earthly usages gaining so complete a victory over our better and spiritual feelings, as is illustrated in those unseemly bowings and courtesyings, noddings, winks, and familiar whisperings, which take place, not only out of, but in the pews,

About the same time that Lieutenant-general Thornton, in his laudable anxiety for the good of the establishment, petitioned the Commons' house of Parliament to enforce the

the instant the doxology is given; and when a few minutes before the preacher has been descanting, perhaps, upon the urgent necessity of keeping our eternal destination ever in view, or upon the terrors of another world, and the intrinsic nothingness of this. In a paper of the Spectator, the foregoing modes of salutation are reprobated with just severity, and which, as Steele observes, for his signature is affixed to it, take up so much time in our churches that might be better employed, and which are so utterly inconsistent with the duty and true intent of our entering into religious as-In farther inveighing against this enormity, as he designates it, and which he tells us is chiefly confined to the politer part of mankind, he has this very pertinent observation: "In Roman Catholic churches and chapels abroad, I myself have observed, more than once, persons of the first quality, of the nearest relation, and intimate acquaintance, passing by one another, unknowing as it were and unknown, and with so little notices of each other, that it looked like having their minds more suitably and more solemnly engaged; at least it was an acknowledgment that they ought to have been so, and which I cannot but think a sufficient and laudable pattern for our imitation in this particular." The practical inferences, which may be derived from these remarks, are calculated to improve and instruct the members of our Protestant churches in every age, however sincere may be their general belief of revelation.

performance of both morning and evening service in every parish church and parochial chapel, and the chapel of every extra-parochial place throughout England and Ireland,—the Bishop of Lincoln conceived it his duty to order the parish church of Bardney to be opened for divine service twice on the Lord's In issuing this mandate to the vicar of that parish, the Rev. Mr. Wray, his lordship was unquestionably only performing a part of the proper business of the station which is allotted to him in Christ's household. Every candid inquirer into the subject must, I conceive, admit the reasonableness of this order; for it has been justly observed by Bishop Horsley, "that the sectaries take advantage of this neglect of double duty; and, what is much worse, the devil also takes advantage of On that half of the day on which there it. is no admission at the parish church, good intentions carry the more pious part of the parishioners to the conventicle, and the devil invites those of another cast to the alehouse *."

^{*} See his Charges, 1813, p. 159, 160.

The Bishop of Lincoln, however, must go further in his warm and enlightened zeal for the general interests of religion, and the credit of our national church. The interposition of his authority must be exercised not only for the restoration of the canonical service of the church twice on the Sunday throughout his extensive diocese, but to have double duty performed on the call of principle, and not as a toil reluctantly submitted to; he must invite the interference of the legislature to an abridgment of the two complete services; for, in their present state, it is more than the average amount of labour which the constitution of those whose lives are spent in regular attendance on the public ceremonies of external worship—the working clergy*, as Mr.

^{*} How many of them behold their own thoughts and feelings embodied in the touching remark of that truly evangelical man and accomplished scholar, Henry Martyn! "My services on the Lord's day leave me always with a pain in the breast, and such a great degree of general relaxation, that I seldom recover it till Tuesday. One complete service at church does more to consume my strength and spirits, than six days of the hardest study or bodily labour." I quote this passage from a very sensible tract,

Brougham would call them—can well support, if those ecclesiastical services be performed (as, generally speaking, they are) with such solemnity and energy of manner as cannot fail to impress the mind of those who are participators of them, that the zeal of their pastors for their souls is disinterested and sincere.

I remember to have once heard a learned prelate say to a clergyman of his diocese, who was conspicuous for the zealous and effective discharge of his pastoral duties, "You have rendered yourself liable to be punished by ecclesiastical censures and penalties, for not reading last Sunday the whole of the exhortation in which the minister giveth warning for the celebration of the eucharist." This, perhaps, may be so positively ruled by the rubric or the canons; as we, in like manner, gather from those ancient constitutions, that if any

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just published, entitled "The Liturgy revised, or the Necessity and beneficial Effects of an authorized Abridgment and careful Revision of the various Services of the Established Church. By the Rev. Robert Cox, A.M., perpetual curate of Stonehouse, North Devon."

person before his ordination had contracted marriage with a widow or an actress, his ordination shall be null. But that bishop must have strong nerves who would venture to act in the spirit of those injunctions. It is very easy, indeed, for our ecclesiastical governors to tell their clergy, from their study chairs or ex cathedrâ, that such and such will be the penalties, if they offend against any of those laws which relate to the ministration of the public offices of the church; but let the former perform, only for a few successive Sundays, the more toilsome duties of the priesthood; let them experimentally feel that pressure upon the whole constitution, which is so often greater than the whole strength of it can enable the working clergy to bear, and we shall have them for instigators and quickeners of that alteration in the liturgy, which proposes to retain all that is equally adapted to the specific wants of the individual, whatever be his personal condition, and to those wants of the congregation at large in which he may conscientiously and properly join, but to exclude all that savours of useless repetition, and tedious tautology. In the place, indeed, of all discussion, and for the sake of brevity, I would ask of any bishop, who duly appreciates the indulgence of a gracious Providence in releasing him from the constant and severe labour of the practical branch of the profession -from reading the two complete services of the Sunday, preaching twice, baptizing, catechising, burying, visiting the sick, things not of rare but ordinary occurrence to the minister of a populous parish; I would ask any fair and impartial person, who knows how much the physical frame of man suffers by constant intellectual excitement, whether a curtailment of the liturgical services would be attended with more objectionable consequences than it was calculated to cure; whether, in short, the direct tendency of it would not be to strengthen and deepen that devotion which is one of the most delightful of spectacles to witness, when man is worshipping the God of his fathers in his sanctuary.

It may safely then be pronounced, that no bishop who has in him any of that regard and sympathy with which, by virtue of his sacred commission, he is supposed to be actuated towards his clergy in general, especially towards those who are the real labourers in the vineyard, who bear the burden and heat of the day, and who are so often oppressed by the feverish variety of their labours, however they may be nerved by principle to pursue them with diligence and vigour, can, under the influence of such feelings, if double duty is to be performed in every Protestant church and chapel of the kingdom (and I am quite ready to admit it is by this means chiefly that the pestilence of religious error is most likely to be counteracted, and the attachment of the bulk of the population to the church preserved), venture to set his face against the abridgment of the Sunday services, on the ground of its being a receipt for mischievous innovation, when so many sincere and judicious friends of the establishment would call it a recipe for its safety, durability, and permanency, and regard it as a work of religious improvement, most conducive to general edification, elevating the tone of devotion alike on the part of the minister and his people.

But I shall here break off for the present, aware that your Grace professes as much dislike to long letters as to long speeches. In my next letter, for I will venture to mark this as No. I., it is my intention to enter into details of all particulars I may deem exceptionable in the constitution and discipline of the church, dividing my subject into two parts: Part I. Episcopal Jurisdiction and Episcopal Revenues; Translations, Commendams, Deans and Chapters; Canons and Rubric; Ecclesiastical Courts, Crown and Lay Patronage, Pluralities, Simony; the Tithe System, as it relates to small Rectories and Vicarages; Funds for Widows and Orphans of the poorer Clergy. Part II. Consecration of Bishops; Ordination of Priests and Deacons:

Title for Orders, Clerical Dress, Creeds, State Prayers, Proper Lessons, Baptisms, Catechisms, the Lord's Supper, Marriage Service, Churching of Women, Visitation of the Sick, Psalmody, the Authorized Version of the Scriptures, Convocation. And, in order to render my matter readable to your Grace, I will do my utmost to unite condensation with circumstantiality, to make that apt selection of details which may give my letter a chance of being interesting without being voluminous. Yet, as I belong to that class of writers who would not choose to use the words of one of our profoundest divines and ablest logicians, "to put three sentences together with a certainty of their being useless*," I shall not go to the press with No. II. till I ascertain whether your Grace is disposed to give your sanction to the main arguments of the foregoing pages.

Now, from your Grace having declared in

^{*} See Considerations upon the Poor Laws (Preface, p. 111), by John Davison, M. A., Fellow of Oriel College, Lond. 1817.

the House of Lords, in reference to the case of Dr. Free, that you had felt the defect of the ecclesiastical laws, in not providing a more expeditious relief in such cases as that alluded to by the noble earl (Hardwick), and that you would readily give your attention in procuring an amendment of them, and to some other points arising out of them, it may pass for no gratuitous assumption, that your Grace is not averse to a full and unprejudiced consideration of the evidence which can be adduced in the matter under discussion. it is a very possible and conceivable thing, that though your Grace may be seriously impressed with the conviction, that there is no wide aberration from the mark of truth in the sentiments I have expressed, yet you may have such positive inconveniences to fear from parliamentary opposition, as may induce your Grace to think, that the advantages proposed bear no proportion to the dangers incurred; so that, after much revolving of this knotty and perplexing point, your Grace may at last

be led to express a similar sentiment on the subject of church reform with that of a learned divine on the subject of German divinity, that he fairly wished it buried at the bottom of the German sea.

Presuming, however, upon the sincerity of your recorded opinions, I must cling to the idea, that your Grace will never refuse countenance or concurrence to that species of reform which ought not to be contrary to the inclination of the church. That one point granted, I would further indulge the hope, that your Grace will be able to accomplish this great desideratum, from the strong probability there is of your long wielding the powers of the government. off, then, those fetters which prevent the church from proving to the Papist and Unitarian, and to all who set themselves in battle array against her, that the reasonableness of her cause is her greatest strength. Do this, my Lord Duke, and Popery will then, and not till then, be rendered nerve-

less by the reappearance of the Protestant ascendancy*, in the manner it should appear

* Sincere admirer as I am of the theological writings of the Bishop of Chester, yet I must acknowledge, that I have read the following passage in his lordship's letter to the clergy of his diocese, occasioned by the act of the legislature granting relief to his majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, with considerable emotions of surprise and regret:-" Is the avowed object of preserving Protestant ascendancy reconcileable with the duty of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us, of not seeking our own, of preferring one another?" P. 26. Surely this sentence would seem to make the religion of Protestants an empty vanity, or little better than an external badge of civil distinction between them and another sort of men, called Papists, that are only contending who shall grasp most power in their hands. we are to place our religion in nothing else but this, to what purpose did our forefathers battle for that ascendancy, the obtaining of which has produced these blessed effectsa pure creed, a reformed ritual, and a tolerant church? And if, too, we are to believe with the bishop, that the preservation of the Protestant ascendancy militates against a Christian duty, I should like to know what interpretation his lordship would put upon these words, that are taken from the order of the Consecration Book, in the Book of Common Prayer: "To be ready, the Lord being his helper, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's word, and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to the same." He who makes this solemn declaration, and thinks as the bishop appears to do, must surely feel himself beset with incompatible interests and conflicting obligations, since Protestant ascendancy forms the very basis of the establishment of the church of England.

in the first Protestant empire on earth, enlisted in the service of truth, under the shield of government. It was the proud boast of him, whose very name bore with it victory, before a Wellington stood forth his competitor in arms, that he should go down to posterity with the Code in his hand. Outstrip Napoleon, then, in legislature, as you have in military fame, and such will be your enduring greatness, that even distant ages will never pronounce your name without a pause of veneration and gratitude.

I am,

MY LORD DUKE,

With great respect,

Your Grace's most humble servant,

A MINISTER OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.

London, January, 1830.

APPENDIX.

A LEARNED friend, whose advice carries with me such weight that I would readily "vail the bonnet" to him upon most topics of discussion, has suggested with reference to the palpable anomaly existing between the income and duty of a dean of Durham, and a bishop of Chester, that in noticing the evil consequent thereupon, I was bound to provide the Possibly your Grace may entertain a similar opinion, if the newspaper accounts be true, which say that in Lord Teynham's interview with your Grace on the subject of the agricultural distresses, your reply to his Lordship's representations was, "Show me the remedy, and it shall have my best consideration." Now, though I do not quite subscribe to the notion that he who points out an abuse is called upon to specify the cure, yet, as I have no desire to shroud my sentiments under vague and obscure generalities, I will not be deterred from attempting so to do by an apprehension of the epithets of "visionary" and "theoretical" which may be fastened upon my expedients, or of having my motives misrepresented by those who will not hear of a reform in any shape.

Your sound practical men, as they are called, are ever prone to designate theorists by the contemptuous appellation of innovators, more ready to pull down than to build up. That I may escape the imputation of devising what at the first glance may appear to those gentlemen as wild a project as Harrington's selling Ireland to the Jews, it is fitting, before I propose the mode of lessening the over laborious duties attached to the see of Chester -duties which are greater than even the best inclinations, conjoined with the utmost exertions, can perform—that I should call your Grace's attention to the preamble of a bill which has been but little noticed, in the hope that the voice of the past may speak amid the loud appeals of the present. The bill I allude to was passed in the reign of Edward the Sixth, and, but for the premature death of that reforming prince, would in all likelihood have been carried into execution. Its preamble is as follows:

"That that bishoprick (Duresme) being then void of a prelate, so that the gift thereof was in the king's pleasure, and the compass of it being so large, extending so many shires, so far distant, that it could not be sufficiently served by one bishop, and since the king, according to his godly disposition, was desirous to have God's holy word preached in these parts, which were wild and barbarous for lack of good preaching and good learning, therefore he intended to have two bishopricks for that diocese; the one at

Duresme, which should have 2000 marks revenue, and another at Newcastle, which should have 1000 marks revenue; and also to found a cathedral church at Newcastle, with a deanery and chapter, out of the revenue of the bishoprick: therefore the bishoprick of Duresme is utterly extinguished and dissolved, and authority is given for letters patent to erect the two new bishopricks, together with the deanery and chapter, at Newcastle, with a proviso that the rights of the deanery, chapter, and cathedral of Duresme should suffer nothing by this act *."

If the wise and pious counsellors of Edward considered the charge of the see of Durham as too enormous for one bishop, when it was not "overstocked with human beings" (to borrow a phrase from the vocabulary of our political economists), it is easy to conceive what they would have said and done with regard to the diocese of Chester, in which ships, mines, and manufactures have produced such a superabundance of population. I would fain then persuade myself (though it may be perhaps a self-delusion, resulting from being too much possessed with a favourite notion) that I am suggesting to your Grace, not a perilous, but an important novelty, when I suggest that a part of Lancashire should be united to the diocese of Sodor and Man, and its bishop have a place in parliament.

^{*} See Burnet's History of the Reformation, Oxford edition, vol. ii. pp. 442, 443.

With respect to the next evil alluded to, my proposal would be,—in order that church property may be employed for church purposes, in a way most likely to meet the general sense of the Protestant community,—that the income of the deanery of Durham, when next vacated, should be annexed in portions to a certain number of the poorest bishoprics. Here then would be a really efficient reform. By act of parliament this plan might be rendered as practicable as it is desirable; for I apprehend it is beyond a doubt that public opinion, the guide to parliamentary decision, would pronounce the measure to be wise and just.

In schemes of reform, my Lord Duke, it often happens that that which considered separately might well suit the purpose it is intended to answer, cannot, when viewed with relation to other parts of the case, be made to adapt itself to it. To obviate any objection of this kind, I would attach to the then valueless deanery of Durham the two prebends of that chapter which have no parochial cure*; and if a deanery of 1200l. per annum be, according to the statement of the late lamented Mr. Rennel, "a prize in the lottery of ecclesiastical preferment †,"

[•] In effecting such a change as I here suggest, it would of course be necessary that the deanery should retain its existing revenues, until the vacancy of the two prebends, from which its new income would be derived, should afford an opportunity of abolishing them.

⁺ See his celebrated Letter to Mr. Brougham, p. 40.

the deanery of Durham, thus endowed, would still remain one of the most valuable pieces of crown patronage, and a most splendid reward for learning and scholarship of the highest class.

The foregoing mode, then, of augmenting some of the smallest bishoprics, while the remainder of those requiring augmentation might be enlarged by appropriating to them a certain portion of the crown lands -a measure which would render the practical adoption of the plan suggested comparatively easy—is, in my humble opinion, infinitely preferable to the practice of attaching Commendams to them; because this procedure carries into effect purposes which appear to me contradictory to all the principles of the constitutional policy of the church, inasmuch as it may be almost said to put an utter extinction upon the rights and expectations of the rest of the clergy*, especially of that class of them who, possessed of high talents, have sought and been enabled to bring them into useful and important operation, and therefore are fairly entitled to a share of the best emoluments of the church.

Now if the fact be, my Lord Duke, that a bishop is to invest his office with that deep and awful responsibility, as that nothing in the concerns of earthliness shall be comparable to it; if it be his bounden duty to spare no pains to acquire a thorough knowledge of the character, habits, intellect, condition,

^{*} There are some caustic remarks on this subject in Swift's tract against enlarging the power of bishops in letting leases.

—See his Works, by Walter Scott, esq., vol. viii. p. 428.

and general circumstances of every clerical individual in his diocese; if a constant, unremitting attention and superintendence be among the chief duties of his exalted station; if, in short, to cite the powerful words of Bishop Watson, "he is so to direct and inspect the flock of Christ, that by his exhortation he may confirm the unstable; by his admonitions reclaim the reprobate; and by the purity of his life render religion amiable and interesting:" then these facts alone ought to serve as a death-warrant to the annexing of commendams to bishoprics. For surely it is an affront to common sense to suppose that those prelates who hold them, and are thereby obliged for some months in the year to keep residence upon them, can discharge the functions of the episcopal office in half so effective a manner as they could if the prescribed sphere of their Christian usefulness were limited to their respective dioceses *.

I am perfectly aware of the extreme difficulty of writing upon certain subjects without giving offence: but when it is the system, and not the individual—the thing, not the person, that is arraigned; then the suspicion of personality ought no more to be ad-

^{*} The mere proposal of some of the most conscientious members of the council of Trent, that a law should be passed to declare episcopal residence of divine obligation, is, I think, conclusive evidence of the justice of the foregoing remarks.—See Historia del Concilio Tridentino, Lond. 1619, fol. lib. xi. For some unanswerable arguments on the duty of episcopal residence, see Nelson's Life of Dr. George Bull, Lord Bishop of St. David's, pp. 366, 377.

mitted than if I were discoursing upon "the moral sense," or pointing out the difference between the Cartesian and Newtonian philosophy. In arguing upon the necessity of getting rid of "episcopal commendams" as a measure that would be productive of so much benefit to the church at large, I would not be understood as speaking individually of those who hold them; who, both as my ecclesiastical superiors, and from their private and personal qualities, have a direct title to my respect; but of the abuse which connects them with so pernicious a system *.

If I rightly remember, it is one of Lord Coke's weighty axioms, that to trace the origin of an error

* When three such men as Bacon, Burnet, and Watson, concur in pronouncing commendams to be the bane of the church, it must be a bold attempt in any one to convert them into a blessing. "These are things of themselves," says the first, "unfit, and ever held of no good report." The second calls them "one of those abuses which popes brought in among us, and from which we have not been able hitherto to free our church;" and the third observes, "that the holding of them exposes bishops to much obloquy, and which, certainly, had better not subsist in the church." Well may that ornament, then, of the Irish church, by his learning and virtues, Bishop Jebb, rejoice that there they have no commendams. Well may he designate them "as arrangements obviously at war with strict clerical residence, and unfriendly to the uniformity of parochial discipline."—See his admirable Speech on the Irish Tithe Composition Amendment Bill, June 10, 1824, pp. 35, 36. If these references be not sufficient to justify my opinions on this subject, I recommend the reader to consult Fra Paolo for arguments, no less conclusive than obvious, against Commendams.—Tr. di Benef., No. 35.

is to refute it. It will not be necessary to wade through many volumes to discover the true cause of the error here, as a single reference to the pages of the learned Stillingfleet leads us to the source of it "The pope," he says, "had a power of dispensing with the canons, which made one benefice void by accepting another;" therefore, when he pleased, he prevented the avoidance upon a promotion by a dispensation beforehand; and so it passed into a commendam, as it was then called: and afterwards, by the statute 26th Hen. VIII. 1., it is enacted, that the king shall have and enjoy, "annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm, as well the style and title of supreme head of the church of England, as all honours, dignities, pre-eminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity of supreme head of the same church belonging and appertaining." "Now the question is," continues Stillingfleet, "what is understood by all these words? whether only such things as of right belong to the crown,and these were already restored by his being recognized as head of the church; or whether such other privileges and commodities as the pope had peaceably and actually enjoyed as head of the church: which seems the more probable opinion, because the erown hath since enjoyed the same privileges as to right of promotion, commendams, and commissions of review; which shows that they were then so understood, and have continued ever since; although

there may have been some who have been unsatisfied about them *."

Let then the smaller bishoprics be augmented to 5000l. per annum (and no real friend to episcopacy would wish to see them fixed at a lower standard), and thus will Stillingfleet's only allowable plea for bishops holding commendams be done away with, viz. "that, where bishoprics are mean and insufficient, it is no unreasonable thing to make a provision for them out of vacant places in their dioceses, or to continue their former benefices for that end †." "In Ireland," says Dr. Jebb, "each bishop is supported solely by the revenues of his own see;" and unless some measure of the foregoing kind for severing commendams from bishoprics be resorted to, this just reason for the non-residence of the bishop in his diocese longer than the present law enjoins will always be successfully urged,—that his temporalities are not so large as those of several of his own clergy, and, therefore, that he cannot live in his diocese with the decent splendour and hospitality becoming to a bishop.

Perfectly consistent, no doubt, it was with the apostolic zeal and apostolic humility of a Jewel to express an ardent prayer, "That the great riches of bishoprics may be diminished and reduced to a certain mediocrity; so that, being delivered from their king-like pomp and the noisiness of a courtly family,

[•] Ecclesiastical Cases, vol. ii. p. 56-59.

[†] Ecclesiastical Cases, vol. ii. p. 462.

they may live in greater tranquillity, and have more leisure to take care of Christ's flock with due attention." Yet, in the present constitution of things, I fear, that the learning and virtues of our bishops would go for little, unless their worth was combined with importance, and encircled with a substantial independence correspondent with their high rank in the scale of society*.

Objectionable then as it may appear to some persons, yet, upon reflection, it will, I think, be generally admitted, that the minister who shall increase the value of the smaller bishoprics will confer a great moral benefit on the country. The first result will be, to crush the ungenerous suspicion which the enemies of our church are so ready to indulge, that the prospect of a translation † may induce

^{*} Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. iii. p. 55.

[†] Those who think and read by proxy, and whose fears and prejudices would instinctively shrink with dismay at any suggested improvements, however prudent, practical, or salutary they might be, however soberly limited and defined by proper qualifications, or manifestly beneficial in their spirit and tendency to the real interests of the church, unless they were grounded on a precedent, will be surprised to hear that a bill was actually brought into the house of commons in 1701, which evinced a disposition to make certain changes with respect to translations and the increase of the value of the smaller bishoprics, by no means palatable to some heads of the hierarchy. As the class of persons I allude to may be curious to know the fate of this bill, I will give it in detail.

[&]quot;30th March, 1701. Sir John Packington, according to order, presented a bill for the better preservation of the Pro-

a bishop to give a vote which, when the time comes for looking beyond human advantage, human blame. and human praise, his heart will not ratify with a sentence of acquittal, however he may have veiled the error under the plausible disguise of gratitude. The next beneficial result will be, that it will supersede the necessity of portions being given to smaller bishoprics in order to increase their value. About sixteen or seventeen years ago, the living of Almondsbury in Gloucestershire, a portion of the archbishop of Canterbury, was annexed by act of parliament to the see of Bristol. It is worth about 10001. per annum, and consequently has rendered the bishopric of Bristol better worth having. But is not this so far objectionable as it enriches one individual at the expense of another? The higher functions of a bishop of Bristol can never be compatible with the discharge testant religion, and for preventing the translation of bishops from one see to another.

"The bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on that day se'nnight.

"15th April. Bill read a second time. On the motion that it be committed, the house divided—

"Resolved, That on Tuesday morning next the house will resolve itself into a committee of the whole house upon the said bill."

This order was postponed several times. On May 31st it was postponed for a fortnight, and no farther mention of the subject occurs. The session closed on June 24.—See Parliamentary Journals, vol. xiii.

of the less important duties of a parish priest; and thus Almondsbury is deprived for ever of the inestimable advantages of a resident incumbent.

In contemplating the advantages that would accrue to the establishment at large from the foregoing proposal being carried into effect, it ought not to be overlooked, that there would thereby be a riddance of the inconsistency of one bishop appearing in the diocese of another as a mere beneficed clergyman, subject to the authority of a brother bishop, whose equal he is in the church. Of this inconsistency Bishop Porteus is said to have given the first example; but very erroneously so, as it is traceable to a remote "His majesty," says Henry Isaacson, the period. friend and amanuensis of Bishop Andrewes, "bestowed upon him the bishopric of Chester; and because of the exility of that bishopric, soon after added the parsonage of Cheam in Surrey*.

The last beneficial result will be, that, exempt from the influence of ambition and worldly cares, our bishops will have larger scope for pursuing that course of action which, even amidst the impediments that now obstruct it, they show that they have so much at heart. We shall see them consecrating, with more effect, their best powers to the best interests of their fellow creatures; we shall see them bending the whole force of their minds to produce the apparatus of a preaching, pious, and popular ministry (so that

^{*} See Bishop Andrewes' Life, p. 32.

no mighty heresiarch* may appear, like another Wesley, to proclaim the want of operative bishops, as well as operative clergy); and to crown and cement the whole, each nobly endeavouring to be as a patriot king, the leader of no particular class of persons, but the head and father of his people†. Thus living, thus acting, it is no romantic hope that honour and respect will court and pursue them, and that future generations, for the good and pious works they have done, will rise up and call them blessed.

"Semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt."
Now, after your Grace has shown how adequate you

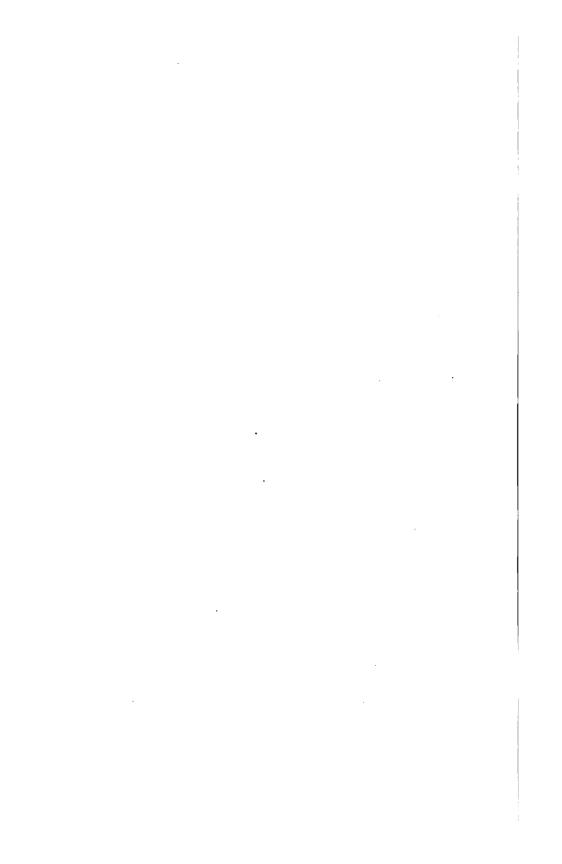
* If the broad fact did not stare us in the face, that another church had been added to our own by Wesley and his followers, I should be inclined to think that the epithet heresiarch was wrongly used; since, according to that high authority, Dr. Southey, Wesley professed in the last year of his life, "that he lived and died a member of the church of England, and hoped that none who regarded his judgment or advice would ever separate from it."—See Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society, vol. i. p. 85.

† It is the just observation of an eminent writer of the present day, "that if the effect of the conduct of a bishop, and of that of a private clergyman on the national mind be compared, it is obvious where the balance of influence preponderates. The clergyman may be obscurely known within a contracted circle: the elevated station of the prelate renders all his actions conspicuous round a spacious horizon, and felt in their tendencies throughout the included area."—See Considerations on the Basis and the Means of the permanent Security of the established Church of England. By Thomas Gisborne, M. A. Prebendary of Durham, p. 63.

are to the performance of the greatest things in the cabinet, as well as in the field, by surmountin culties insuperable to any man living but yourself, it is a fair inference to assume, that you are the last man in the world to be diverted from a measure which your Grace may deem to be immediately for the benefit, and ultimately for the salvation, of the church, by any such idle exclamations as the following: "O, do not touch this topic!" "It is too delicate; there are too many conflicting opinions afloat upon it." "It must be left alone; it is too complex and harassing to be mooted." No; your Grace has been too long a thinker and an actor amid the mighty changes of human affairs to be swayed by any such timid forebodings as these; especially when there can be little doubt that you would conduct your operations with the expression of an intelligent public opinion in your favour.

In short, my Lord Duke, the existing defects of our church require for their correction a political Luther, a man of straightforward purpose of heart and mind—full of great thoughts, and with courage and firmness enough to realise them amid a host of difficulties—of penetration to discover that "early reformations are made in cool blood, late reformations under a state of inflammation," and that there is no fault in our ecclesiastical establishment which may not be safely removed or easily repaired—a man who has judgment to determine well whether gentle palliatives or vigorous remedies are best fitted to the

case, and whom no apprehension of loss of power and place would for a moment deter from meeting the urgency of the demand—fiat experimentum—if it were the conviction of his mind, that the correctives proposed for the grievances complained of were compatible with the security of the church and its permanent union with the state. It is but the homage of sincerity to add, that if the country find him not in your Grace, in vain, perhaps, shall we look for him in another.



POSTSCRIPT.

As these sheets were passing through the press, I caught a whisper from a high quarter, that, whilst the Commission of Inquiry is engaged in its duties of investigating the abuses of our ecclesiastical courts, with a view to correct them, those heads of the clergy who are known to be favourable to a temperate reform will hold their deliberations at the palace of the Primate, to survey the state and affairs of the church in every possible aspect; and will seriously ponder on what can be safely done towards satisfying the public mind in this large and complicated question.

Now, as to the strong necessity which exists of putting an end to the irritations of mind and body that arise from the unnecessary procrastination, endless expense, and intricate chicanery of our spiritual courts, there can be but one opinion. Nearly two centuries ago the constitution of our ecclesiastical judicature was the theme of severe invective from some of the warmest friends of the church. That powerful advocate of the establishment, Lord Clarendon, in comparing the civil and ecclesiastical courts together, observes, "I have never yet spoken with one clergyman who hath had the experience of both litigations that hath not ingenuously confessed

he had rather, in the respect of his trouble, charge, and satisfaction to his understanding, have three suits depending in Westminster-hall, than one in the Arches, or any ecclesiastical court *;" and if there be any shadow of truth in the remarks offered in the Appendix, then the soundness of that judgment is not to be distrusted which affirms the next desideratum to be a Commission of Inquiry into the general state of the established church, in order to remove the spots and blemishes which disfigure certain departments of her system.

Time was, my Lord Duke, that the talents of men who had risen "to the high places" in the church were more likely to be employed in stifling inquiry upon the great subject before us, than in giving it a right direction; but so far as this observation may be thought to apply to the present guardians and governors of the church, there is good ground for believing that in most respects it is un-The season of apathy and, I hope, of founded. timidity is now passed. There may be some, indeed, of high station in the church, and of high reputation for knowledge, who, upon all projects of church reform, however equitable and expedient, would be disposed to adopt the language of Cardinal Sodorinus t, "Stop at first;" or to chime in with these sentiments of certain learned friends of good Bishop Carleton-" If," say they, "we once confess any errors at all, they will straightway cry out that many

^{*} History of the Rebellion, Oxford edit. vol. ii. p. 32.

[†] See Concilio Tridentino, Lib. i.

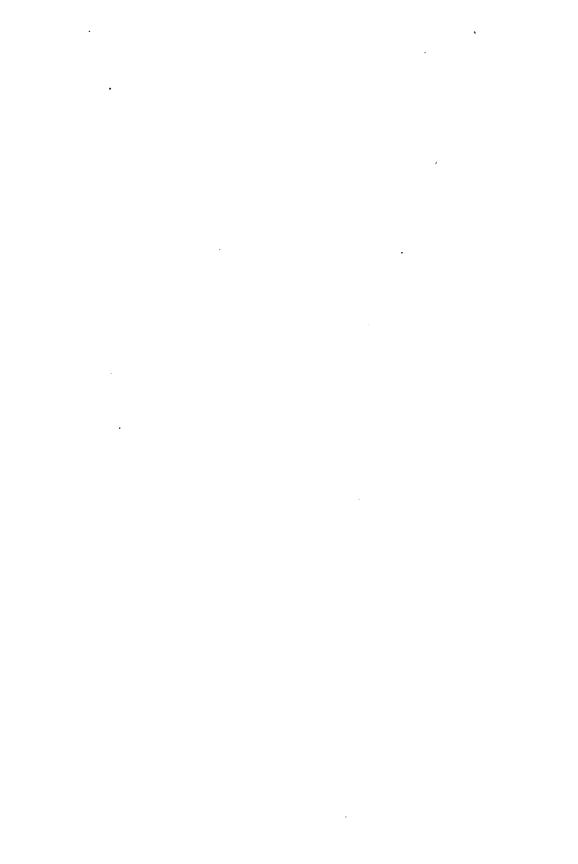
other things also are worthy to be reformed besides those which we shall yield unto them, and so they will be still growing upon us, that we shall never have done reforming *." There may be a few even who will see nothing contrary to justice, decency, or reason in those glaring anomalies, which are at once offensive to the feelings of the well-affected members of the church, and injurious to the best interests of society. But I am greatly misinformed, indeed, if there be not those among the prelatical order who will listen to the counsel of the unprejudiced, and the arguments of the moderate; who, recollecting what little security there would be for the dignities and revenues of the church, were public opinion to manifest a decided hostility towards her (quod Deus avertat), will be cautious how they thwart and oppose its honest and reasonable wishes, from the apprehension that, by complying with them, a door be opened by which a bolder spirit of innovation may find admittance.

Now some may think that, in my full belief of the report I have just alluded to, it would be more fitting to my station in the church, were I to proceed no farther in the design that I had chalked out to myself; and I should immediately give in to this opinion, did not the history of past years irrefragably demonstrate, that every great ecclesiastical as well as political change must be the achievement of the many, not the few. There must be a thousand rills to form the

^{*} See Life of Bernard Gilpin, Lond. 1727, pp. 57, 58.

mighty stream. It is worth while, then, to bestow my mite on the good cause, if it should produce the effect only of stimulating abler men to show where I have erred, and incite them to heap upon it their peculiar and distinct offerings. We all are the instruments and ministers of Him who fixes the boundaries of our respective usefulness; and I shall rest satisfied, that I have added my little item to the public stock of human happiness, if what I have said, or may hereafter say, on the momentous question in discussion, shall, in the remotest degree, be the means of inducing your Grace strictly and impartially to review and scrutinize it.

Hoping and trusting, then, that the subject of church reform is now about to undergo the investigation of persons equal to all the difficulties of the task, I shall, instead of entering into a detailed examination of the several important topics specified in page 81 of my letter, confine myself, as more suitable to my humble allotment in the sphere of human usefulness, to such general and miscellaneous hints as may be likely to suggest conclusions susceptible of useful application in practice; and I shall even refrain from submitting these to your Grace's consideration until there shall be a visible preparation amongst those who may be appointed, under the public authority of church and state, for laying the chief foundation-stone of that salutary reform which has so long been the object of every good man's fervent aspirations.



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